Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

BV 110 .H65 1825
Holden, George, 1783-1865.
The Christian sabbath

SCC
#12,659

SERMONS

PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY

J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

NEW VOLUMES.

NEWMAN.—Parochial Sermons. Volume the Second. For the Festivals of the Church. By the Rev. John Henry Newman, M.A. Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, and Fellow of Oriel College. 8vo. 10s. 6d. *(Just published.)*

*** Lately Published the First Volume. 10s. 6d.

ANDERSON.—Discourses on Elijah and John the Baptist. By the Rev. J. S. M. Anderson, M.A. Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, and Perpetual Curate of St. George's Chapel, Brighton. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

GIRDLESTONE.—A Course of Sermons for the Year. By the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, M.A. Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire. 2 vols. 12mo. 14s.

ROSE.—The Law of Moses viewed in Connexion with the History and Character of the Jews, with a Defence of the Book of Joshua against Professor Leo of Berlin: being the Hulsean Lectures for 1833. To which is added, an Appendix, containing Remarks on the Arrangement of the Historical Scriptures adopted by Gesenius, De Wette, and others. By Henry John Rose, B.D. Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. 8vo. 8s.

SLADE.—A Third Volume of Plain Parochial Sermons, Preached in the Parish Church of Bolton-Le-Moors. By the Rev. James Slade, M.A. Vicar of Bolton, and Prebendary of Chester. 12mo. 6s. *(Just published.)*

*** Lately Published, the Second Edition of Vols. I. and II.

LANDON.—Ten Sermons, preached in the Parish Church of Tavistock. By the Rev. Whittington H. Landon, M.A. 8vo. 6s.

HUTTON.—Sermons. By the Rev. F. H. Hutton, M.A. Curate of Trinity Church, St. Mary-le-bone. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

ASPINALL.—Sermons, chiefly for particular Sundays and Occasions. By the Rev. James Aspinall, A.M. Minister of St. Luke's Church, Liverpool. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

FOWLE.—Ten Plain Sermons, chiefly on particular occasions. To which are added, Two Assize Sermons, Preached in the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, in the year 1832. By the Rev. Fulwar William Fowle, Rector of Allington, and Perpetual Curate of Amesbury, Wilts. 12mo. 5s. 6d. *(Just published.)*

SIDEBOTTOM.—Plain Sermons, Preached in the Parish Church of Hampton, Middlesex. By the Rev. H. F. Sidebottom, M.A. 12mo. 3s. *(Just published.)*

BURTON.—Sermons, preached in the Parish Church of Rugeley, in the County of Stafford. By the Rev. R. C. Burton, M.A. 12mo. 6s. 6d.

ANDERSON.—Ten Discourses on the principal Events in the Life and Character of Moses. By the Rev. M. Anderson, M.A. Minister of East Dulwich Chapel, and late of St. John's College, Cambridge. 12mo. 6s.

NEW EDITIONS.

MATHEW.—A Series of Sermons on various Subjects of Doctrine and Practice. By the late Rev. George Mathew, M.A. Vicar of Greenwich, and Alternate Morning Preacher at St. James's, Westminster. Fifth Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

MELVILL.—Sermons. By Henry Melvill, M.A. Minister of Camden Chapel, Camberwell, and late Fellow and Tutor of St. Peter's College, Cambridge. Second Edition. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

AINGER.—Parochial Sermons. By the Rev. Thomas Ainger, M.A. late of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Assistant Minister of the New Church of St. Mary, Greenwich. Second Edition. 12mo. 6s.

ANDREWS, BP.—Sixteen Sermons, chiefly on the principal Fasts and Festivals of the Church; from the Works of Bishop Andrews, modernized for General Readers. By M. A. Davis. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

ARNOLD.—Sermons. By the Rev. Thomas Arnold, D.D. Head Master of Rugby School, and late Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. Third Edition. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

ASPINALL.—Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical. By the Rev. James Aspinall, A.M., Minister of St. Luke's Church, Liverpool. 3 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

BAKER.—The German Pulpit; being a Collection of Sermons by the most eminent modern Divines of Germany. Selected and Translated by the Rev. R. Baker, Chaplain to the British Factory at Hamburgh. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

BAKER.—Discourses and Sacramental Addresses to a Village Congregation. By the Rev. D. B. Baker, A.M. of St. John's College, Cambridge, and now Curate of St. Luke's, Chelsea. Second Edition. 12mo. 4s.

BEAN.—Parochial Instruction, or Sermons delivered from the Pulpit, at different times in the course of Thirty Years. By the late James Bean, M.A., Assistant Minister of Welbeck Chapel. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

BELL.—Sermons on various Subjects, by the late William Bell, D.D., Prebendary of Westminster. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

BERENS.—Thirty-three Village Sermons, on the chief Articles of Faith, and the means of Grace, on certain Parts of the Christian Character, and on some of the Relative Duties. By the Rev. Edward Berens, M.A. Archdeacon of Berks. 12mo. 4s. 6d.

BERKELEY.—Sermons by the late Rev. George Berkeley, LL.D. Prebendary of Canterbury. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

BEVERIDGE, BP.—Sermons selected and abridged from the Works of Bishop Beveridge. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

BLYTH.—Sermons to Children. By the Rev. G. B. Blyth, of Clare Hall, Cambridge. 18mo. 2s. 6d.

BOUCHER.—Sermons by the late Rev. John Boucher, M.A. Vicar of Kirknewton, and Rector of Shaftesbury. 12mo. 7s.

BOUDIER.—Plain and Practical Sermons. By the Rev. John Boudier, A.M. Vicar of St. Mary's, Warwick. 8vo. 9s.

BREWSTER.—Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, delivered in the Parish Church of Stockton-upon-Tees, during Lent, in the years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806. By John Brewster, M.A. Rector of Egglescliffe, in the County of Durham. Second Edition, in one Volume, 8vo. 14s.

BURTON.—Sermons on Miscellaneous Subjects, preached before the University of Oxford. By the Rev. Edward Burton, D.D. Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

CHANDLER.—The Scheme of Divine Revelation considered, principally in its Connection with the Progress and Improvement of Human Society; in Eight Sermons, at the Bampton Lecture in 1825. By the very Rev. George Chandler, LL.D. Dean of Chichester, and Rector of All Souls, St. Marylebone. 8vo. 8s.

CHEVALLIER.—On the Historical Types contained in the Old Testament. Twenty Discourses preached before the University of Cambridge, at the Hulsean Lecture in 1826. By the Rev. Temple Chevallier, M.A. late Fellow and Tutor at Catherine Hall. 8vo. 12s.

———————Twenty Discourses on the Proofs of Divine Power and Wisdom derived from the Study of Astronomy, and on the Evidence, Doctrines, and Precepts of Revealed Religion, preached before the University of Cambridge, at the Hulsean Lecture in 1827. By the same Author. 8vo. 12s.

CLAY.—Twenty-five Sermons, preached to the Inmates of a Gaol, and in a great degree adapted to a Country Congregation. By the Rev. John Clay, Chaplain to the House of Correction, Preston. 12mo. 6s.

COBBE.—THIRTY SERMONS, on various Subjects. By Richard Chalioner Cobbe, D.D. Vicar of St. Anne's, in Ireland. 2 vols. 8vo. 10s.

COLE.—SIXTEEN SERMONS on Practical and Doctrinal Subjects. By the Rev. B. T. H. Cole, A.M. Rector of Warbleton, Sussex. 8vo. 8s.

COLLINSON.—A KEY to the Writings of the principal Fathers of the Christian Church who flourished during the First Three Centuries. In Eight Sermons at the Bampton Lecture in 1813. By the Rev. John Collinson, M.A. Rector of Gateshead, Durham. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

COXE.—PRACTICAL SERMONS. By the Rev. R. C. Coxe, M.A. Curate of St. James's, Westminster, and formerly Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. 12mo. 6s.

CRESSWELL.—SERMONS on Domestic Duties. By the Rev. Daniel Cresswell, D.D. Vicar of Enfield, Middlesex. 12mo. 5s.

DARNELL.—SERMONS. By W. N. Darnell, B.D. Rector of Stanhope. 8vo. 9s.

D'OYLY.—SERMONS, chiefly doctrinal, with Notes. By George D'OYLY, D.D. F.R.S. Rector of Lambeth; and of Sundridge, Kent. 8vo. 12s.

DRUMMOND, ABP.—SERMONS on Public Occasions, and a Letter on Theological Study. By Robert, late Archbishop of York. 8vo. 5s.

DRYSDALE.—SERMONS by the late Rev. John Drysdale, D.D. F.R.S. Edin. With his Life, by Professor Dalzel. 2 vols. 8vo. 12s.

FABER.—SERMONS on various Subjects and Occasions. By George Stanley Faber, B.D. Master of Sherburn Hospital. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

———— HORÆ MOSAICÆ, or a Dissertation on the Credibility and Theology of the Pentateuch, comprehending the Substance of Eight Lectures, read at the Bampton Lecture in 1801. By the same Author. The Second Edition, revised, altered, and augmented. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

FARRER.—SERMONS on the Mission and Character of Christ, and on the Beatitudes, comprehending what were preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1803. By the late Rev. John Farrer, M.A. Rector of St. Clement, Eastcheap. 8vo. 7s.

FORSTER.—SERMONS upon various Subjects, delivered at Tunbridge Wells. By the Rev. T. Forster, late Minister at that Chapel. 2 vols. 8vo. 10s.

FOURTEEN SERMONS on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and on other Subjects: preached in a Parish Church in the West of England, in 1833 and 1834. By a late Fellow of a College in Oxford. 12mo. 3s.

FRANCKLIN.—SERMONS on the Relative Duties. By the late Thomas Francklin, D.D. Rector of Brasted, Kent. 8vo. 5s.

FRANKS.—TWENTY SERMONS on the Apostolical Preaching and Vindication of the Gospel to the Jews, Samaritans, and devout Gentiles; as exhibited in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Peter, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Preached for the Hulsean Lecture in 1823. By J. C. Franks, M.A. Chaplain of Trin. Coll. Camb., and Vicar of Huddersfield, Yorkshire. 8vo. 12s.

———— The HULSEAN LECTURES for 1821; Twenty Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity, as they were stated and enforced in the Discourses of our Lord. By the same Author. 8vo. 12s.

FRASER.—SERMONS on the Lives of some of the first Promulgators of Christianity, and on Miscellaneous Subjects, preached in the Parish of Bromley, Middlesex. By the Rev. Peter Fraser, M.A. Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and Rector of Kegworth. 8vo. 8s.

GARDINER.—SERMONS on various Subjects, preached at the Octagon Chapel, Bath. By the Rev. John Gardiner, D.D. Rector of Brailsford, and Vicar of Shirley, in the County of Devon. Second Edition. 8vo. 8s.

GILSON.—SERMONS on PRACTICAL SUBJECTS. By the late David Gilson, M.A. Curate of St. Saviour's, Southwark. 2 vols. 8vo. 16s.

GIRDLESTONE.—The FIRST SERIES of TWENTY PAROCHIAL SERMONS, with an Appendix, containing Parochial Papers. By the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, M.A. Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire. Second Edition. 12mo. 5s.

———————. The SECOND SERIES of TWENTY PAROCHIAL SERMONS, Adapted to the Use of Families. With an Appendix, containing Helps for Family Devotion. Second Edition. By the same Author. 12mo. 5s.

*** The Appendix may be had separately, price 4d.

GIRDLESTONE.—Seven Sermons on the Course of Christian Life. Third Edition. By the same Author. 12mo. 2s. 6d.

———————— Seven Sermons on the Lord's Supper: with appropriate Devotions for Private or Family Use. By the same Author. 12mo. 2s. 6d.

———————— Seven Sermons on the Social Conduct of a Christian. Addressed to an Individual. By the same Author. Second Edition. 12mo. 2s. 6d.

———————— Seven Sermons, preached during the prevalence of Cholera, in the parish of Sedgley: together with a Narrative of this awful Visitation, and of the religious impression produced in the South of Stafford Mining District. With a Map. By the same Author. 12mo. 2s. 6d.

GRANT.—A Course of Sermons for the Year. By the Rev. Johnson Grant, M.A. Rector of Binbrook, and Minister of Kentish Town Chapel. Vol. I. (from the New Year to Trinity Sunday). 8vo. 10s. 6d.

GRAVES.—Select Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity, arranged in Four Discourses; delivered in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin: to which are annexed, Notes and Illustrations. By the late Very Rev. Richard Graves, D.D. M.R.I.A. Dean of Ardagh, &c. 8vo. 7s.

———————— Sermons on Practical Subjects, preached at St. Michael's, St. Mary's, in Christ Church Cathedral, and in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin. By the same Author. Edited by his Son, Richard Hastings Graves, D.D. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

GRAY, BP.—Discourses on various Subjects, illustrative of the Evidence, Influence, and Doctrines of Christianity. By the late Right Rev. Robert Gray, D.D. Lord Bishop of Bristol, and Prebendary of Durham. 8vo. 6s.

HAGGITT.—Sermons. By the Rev. John Haggitt, Rector of Ditton, near Cambridge. 8vo. 8s.

HAMPDEN.—The Scholastic Philosophy considered in its relation to Christian Theology, in a Course of Sermons delivered before the University of Oxford, at the Bampton Lecture in 1832. By Renn Dickson Hampden, D.D., Principal of St. Mary Hall, Oxford. 8vo. 13s.

HARDINGE.—Plain Discourses, Doctrinal and Practical, adapted to a Country Congregation. By the Rev. Sir Charles Hardinge, Bart. A.M. Vicar of Tunbridge, and Rector of Crowhurst, Sussex. 2 vols. 12mo. 10s.

HAYDEN.—Sermons. By the Rev. John Hayden, Curate of Londonderry. 8vo. 7s. 6d.

HEAD.—Sermons on the Spiritual Comfort and Assurance attainable by Obedience and Conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ: adapted to Memory. With an Essay on the Use of Memory as a means of Grace. By Henry Erskine Head, M.A. Rector of Feniton, Devon. 8vo. 6s. 6d.

HEWLETT.—Sermons on various Subjects. By the Rev. John Hewlett, B.D. and F.A.S. Rector of Hilgay, Norfolk. 3 vols. 8vo. 1l. 11s. 6d.
*** The last Volume may be had separately, price 10s. 6d.

HEYLYN.—Select Discourses on the principal Points of Natural and Revealed Religion. By the late John Heylyn, D.D. 2 vols. 8vo. 12s.

HOBART, BP.—Sermons on the principal Events and Truths of Redemption. To which are annexed, an Address and Dissertation on the State of the Departed, and the Descent of Christ into Hell. By the late John Henry Hobart, D.D. Bishop of the Episcopal Church, New York, &c. &c. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

HOOLE.—Discourses delivered in the Parish Church of All Saints, Poplar. By Samuel Hoole, A.M. Rector. 8vo. 8s. 6d.

HORN.—Sermons on various Subjects. By Thomas Horn, A.M St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. 12mo. 3s. 6d.

HORNE.—The Religious Necessity of the Reformation asserted, and the Extent to which it was carried in the Church of England vindicated. In Eight Sermons, at the Bampton Lecture in 1828. By Thomas Horne, B.D. Rector of St. Catherine Coleman, and formerly Student of Christ Church. 8vo. 8s.

HORNE, BP.—The Discourses of the late Right Reverend George Horne, D.D. Lord Bishop of Norwich. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

HUDLESTON.—Plain and Popular Subjects of Religion and Morality, treated in a plain and popular manner, in TWENTY DISCOURSES. By the Rev. Andrew Hudleston, D.D. Incumbent Curate of St. Nicholas, Whitehaven, and Rector of Bowness, in Cumberland. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

HUGHES.—SERMONS intended for Popular Instruction. By the Rev. Henry Hughes, M.A. of Trinity College, Oxford, and Curate of Great Linford, Bucks. 12mo. 5s.

IVES.—SERMONS originally composed for a Country Congregation. By the Rev. Cornelius Ives, M.A. Rector of Bradden, Northamptonshire, and late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. Second Edition. 12mo. 6s.

JAMES.—The Benefit and Necessity of the CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS, and the Perpetual Obligation of the MORAL LAW, particularly as binding us to keep the Christian Sabbath, considered, in FOUR SERMONS, preached before the University of Oxford; with an Appendix, illustrating the last of these subjects, in remarks on Dr. Heylyn's History of the Sabbath. By William James, M.A. Vicar of Cobham, Surrey, and Fellow of Oriel College. 8vo. 8s. 6d.

JONES.—SERMONS on the COMMANDMENTS. By Robert Jones, D.D. Vicar of East Bedfont, Middlesex. 8vo. 6s.

JONES.—SERMONS on Various Subjects and Occasions. By the Rev. William Jones, A.M. F.R.S. late Minister of Nayland. Now first published from the original MSS. Edited by the Rev. W. H. Walker, A.M. Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

JORTIN.—SERMONS on different Subjects. By the late Rev. John Jortin, D.D. Archdeacon of London. To which are added, the Doctrine of a Future State, and Four Charges. 4 vols. 8vo. 1l. 16s.

KETT.—SERMONS preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1790. By the late Rev. Henry Kett, M.A. of Trinity College. 8vo. 7s.

LANCASTER.—THE POPULAR EVIDENCE of CHRISTIANITY, Stated and Examined, in Eight SERMONS at the Bampton Lecture in 1831. By T. W. Lancaster, M.A. Vicar of Banbury, and formerly of Queen's College, Oxford. 8vo. 12s.

LLOYD.—DISCOURSES, chiefly Doctrinal, delivered in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin. By Bartholomew Lloyd, D.D. M.R.I.A. Provost of Trinity College. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

LOWTH, BP.—SERMONS, and other Remains, of Bishop Lowth, D.D. some time Lord Bishop of London; now first collected and arranged, partly from original MSS. With an Introductory Memoir, by the Rev. Peter Hall, M.A. Curate of St. Luke's, Chelsea. With Portrait. 8vo. 12s.

LUSCOMBE, BP.—SERMONS from the French; translated, abridged, and adapted to the English Pulpit. By the Right Rev. Bp. Luscombe, LL.D. 8vo. 9s.

MALTBY, BP.—SERMONS, preached in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn. By the Right Rev. Edward Maltby, D.D. F.R.S. S.A. Lord Bishop of Chichester. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

MANNING.—SERMONS on IMPORTANT SUBJECTS. By the late Owen Manning, B.D. Prebendary of Lincoln. 2 vols in one. 8vo. 9s.

MANT, BP.—An APPEAL to the GOSPEL, or an Inquiry into the Justice of the Charge alleged by Methodists and other Objectors, that the Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy; in a Series of Discourses delivered at the Bampton Lecture in 1812. By the Right Rev. Richard Mant, D.D. Lord Bishop of Down and Connor. 8vo. Sixth Edition. 12s.

——— SERMONS for Parochial and Domestic use, designed to illustrate and enforce, in a connected view, the most important articles of Christian Faith and Practice. By the same Author. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

MILLER.—SERMONS intended to show a sober Application of Scriptural Principles to the Realities of Life. With a Preface, addressed to the Clergy. By John Miller, M.A. Late Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. 8vo. 12s.

MORGAN.—SERMONS on several Subjects. By the late John Pilkington Morgan, M.A. Vicar of Hitchin, Herts. 2 vols. small 8vo. 9s.

MORGAN.—A compressed VIEW of the RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES and PRACTICES of the AGE; or, a Trial of the Chief Spirits that are in the World, by the Standard of the Scriptures: attempted in Eight Sermons, at the Bampton Lecture in 1819. By Hector Davies Morgan, M.A. of Trinity College, Minister of Castle Hedingham, Essex, and Prebendary of Brecon. 8vo. 12s.

MOUNTAIN.—Advent. Twelve Sermons, by the Rev. J. H. Brooke Mountain, M.A. Prebendary of Lincoln; Rector of Blunham, Beds; Vicar of Hemel Hempsted, Herts; and Domestic Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester. 12mo. 4s. 6d.

NANCE.—Sermons on various Subjects and Occasions. By the Rev. John Nance, D.D. Rector of Old Romney, Kent. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

NARES.—Sermons on Faith, and other Subjects. By the late Robert Nares, M.A. F.R.S. &c. Archdeacon of Stafford, Canon Residentiary of Lichfield, and Rector of Allhallows, London Wall. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

————Discourses preached before the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. By the same Author. 8vo. 7s.

————A Connected and Chronological View of the Prophecies relating to the Christian Church, in Twelve Sermons, preached at the Warburtonian Lecture from 1800 to 1804. By the same Author. 8vo. 7s. 6d.

NARES.—Discourses on the Three Creeds, and on the Homage offered to Our Saviour, &c. &c. &c. By Edward Nares, D.D. Rector of Biddenden, Kent. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

NOLAN.—The Operations of the Holy Ghost illustrated and confirmed by Scriptural Authorities, in a Series of Sermons, evincing the Wisdom and Consistency of the Economy of Grace: with Notes and Illustrations, &c. By the Rev. Frederic Nolan, LL.D. Vicar of Prittlewell. 8vo. 12s.

————The Analogy of Revelation and Science established in a Series of Lectures, delivered before the University of Oxford in 1833, on the Foundation of the late Rev. John Bampton. By the same Author. 8vo. 15s.

OGILVIE.—Sermons on various Subjects. By the late James Ogilvie, D.D. Rector of Westover Parish, in Virginia. 8vo. 5s.

OLLIVANT.—Sermons preached in the Chapel of St. David's College, Lampeter. By Alfred Ollivant, M.A. late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Vice-Principal of St. David's College, Prebendary of St. David's, and Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. 8vo. 8s.

OXENDEN.—Sermons preached before a Country Congregation. By the Rev. Montagu Oxenden, A.M. Rector of Luddenham, and Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lord Prudhoe. 8vo. 8s. 6d.

PARKINSON.—Sermons on Points of Doctrine and Rules of Duty. By the Rev. R. Parkinson, M.A. late Lecturer in Divinity at St. Bees' College, and now Fellow of Christ's College, Manchester. 2 vols. 12mo. 12s.

PARRY.—Parochial Sermons, preached in the West Indies: with Three Occasional Sermons. By Thomas Parry, M.A. Archdeacon of Antigua, and late Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

PLUMPTRE.—A Popular Commentary on the Bible, in a Series of Sermons, following, in the Old Testament, the Course of the First Lessons at Morning and Evening Service on Sundays. Designed for Parish Churches, or Reading in Private Families. By the late Rev. J. Plumptre, B.D. Vicar of Great Gransden. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

POTT.—A Course of Sermons for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England. By Joseph Holden Pott, A.M. Archdeacon of London, and Vicar of Kensington. 8vo. 12s.

PROWETT.—Sermons, Original and Translated. By the Rev. John Prowett, A.M. Rector of Edburton, Sussex. 8vo. 6s.

RENNELL.—Discourses on various Subjects. By Thomas Rennell, D.D. Dean of Winchester. Second Edition. 8vo. 7s.

RENNELL.—Sermons on various Subjects. By the late Rev. Thomas Rennell, B.D. Vicar of Kensington, and Prebendary of Salisbury. Third Edition. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

RIDDOCH.—Sermons on Several Subjects and Occasions. By the late James Riddoch, A.M. one of the Ministers of St. Paul's Church, Aberdeen. New Edition, in 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

ROBINSON.—Sermons. By the Rev. John Travers Robinson, B.A. (published by request). 12mo. 3s. 6d.

ROBSON.—Sermons on various Subjects, selected from the MSS. of the late Rev. E. Robson, A.M. of Emanuel College, Cambridge, Vicar of Orston, and Lecturer of St. Mary, Whitechapel. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 1s.

ROSE.—The Commission and consequent Duties of the Clergy, in a Series of Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge. By Hugh James Rose, B.D. 8vo. 9s.

————Eight Sermons, preached before the University of Cambridge in 1830 and 1831; to which is added, a Sermon preached before the University on Commencement Sunday, 1826. By the same Author. Second Edition. 8vo. 7s. 6d.

ROWLATT.—Sermons preached at the Temple Church. By the Rev. W. H. Rowlatt, M.A. Reader at the Temple, and Domestic Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lady Gifford. 8vo. 12s.

SANDFORD, BP.—Sermons, preached in St. John's Chapel, Edinburgh. By the late Daniel Sandford, D.D. one of the Bishops of the Scotch Episcopal Church, and formerly Student of Christ Church, Oxford. 8vo. 12s.

SCATTERGOOD.—Fifty-two Sermons upon several Occasions. By the late Samuel Scattergood. 2 vols. 8vo. 18s.

SCOTT.—Sermons on interesting Subjects. By the late Rev. James Scott, D.D. Rector of Simonburn, and formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. To which is prefixed a Sketch of his Life. 8vo. 9s.

SEABURY, BP.—Discourses on several Subjects. By the late Samuel Seabury, D.D. Bishop of Connecticut and Rhode-Island. 2 vols. 8vo. 14s.

Sermons, for Sunday Evenings, upon the Ten Commandments. Second Edition, enlarged. 12mo. 4s. 6d.

SEWELL.—Parochial Sermons, on particular Occasions. By the Rev. W. Sewell, M.A. Fellow and Tutor of Exeter College, Oxford, and Chaplain of Carisbrooke Castle. 12mo. 5s.

SHEPHERD.—Family and Parochial Sermons. By the Rev. William Shepherd, of Trinity College, Cambridge; and Curate of Cheddington, Bucks. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

SHUTTLEWORTH.—Sermons on the Leading Principles and Practical Duties of Christianity. By Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth, D.D. Warden of New College, Oxford, and Rector of Foxley, Wilts. Volume the Second. 8vo. 12s.

*** Also, a Second Edition of the First Volume. 12s.

SMITH.—Sermons on the most interesting Subjects of the Christian Religion. By the late Rev. H. Smith, D.D. Reader of the Temple and Lecturer of St. Margaret's, Westminster. Second Edition. 8vo. 5s.

SOAMES.—An Inquiry into the Doctrines of the Anglo-Saxon Church, in Eight Sermons, preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1830. By Henry Soames, M.A. of Wadham College, Rector of Shelley, Essex, and Author of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England. 8vo. 13s.

SPENCER.—Sermons on various Subjects. By the Hon. and Venerable Aubrey G. Spencer, LL.D. Archdeacon of Bermuda. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

SPRY.—Christian Unity doctrinally and historically considered, in Eight Sermons, preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1817. By John Hume Spry, D.D. Rector of St. Mary-le-bone, and Prebendary of Canterbury. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

STEBBING.—Sermons. By the Rev. H. Stebbing, M.A., &c. Alternate Morning Preacher at St. James's Chapel, Hampstead-road. 12mo. 6s. 6d.

STEVENS.—A Series of Discourses on the Festivals and Fasts and other peculiar Days of the Church of England. By Brooke Bridges Stevens, M.A. of Jesus College, Cambridge. 8vo. 9s.

STRONG.—Discourses, chiefly Delivered, or prepared for Delivery, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, inscribed, with gracious permission, to His Most Excellent Majesty the King. By the Rev. William Strong, A.M. one of His Majesty's Chaplains in Ordinary. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

SWAN.—Sermons on several Subjects; with Notes, Critical, Historical, and Explanatory: and an Appendix. By the Rev. Charles Swan, late of Catherine Hall, Cambridge. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

TILLOTSON, ABP.—Sermons, selected and abridged from the Works of Archbishop Tillotson. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l.

TOWNSEND.—Sermons on some of the most interesting Subjects in Theology. By the Rev. George Townsend, M.A. Prebendary of Durham, and Vicar of Northallerton. 8vo. 12s.

TURNOUR.—Trinitarian and Unitarian Sermons, according to the Scriptural Doctrine of the Church of England: forming the Fifth and Sixth Volumes of the Author's Discourses. By the Hon. and Rev. E. J. Turnour, M.A. formerly of St. Mary Hall, Oxford. 2 vols. 8vo. 16s.

Twelve Plain Sermons, preached in a Village Church. 12mo. 4s.

VAN MILDERT, BP.—An Historical View of the Rise and Progress of Infidelity, with a Refutation of its Principles and Reasonings, in a Series of Sermons, preached at the Boyle Lecture. By William Van Mildert, D.D. Lord Bishop of Durham. Fourth Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

———————Sermons preached before the Hon. Society of Lincoln's Inn, from the year 1812 to the year 1819. By the same Author. Second Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. 1l. 4s.

———————An Inquiry into the General Principles of Scripture Interpretation, in Eight Sermons, preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1814. By the same Author. Second Edition. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

VAUX.—The Benefits annexed to a Participation in the Two Christian Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, considered in Eight Sermons preached at the Bampton Lecture in 1826. By William Vaux, B.D. late Fellow of Balliol College, and Prebendary of Winchester. 8vo. 9s.

The Village Preacher, a Collection of short plain Sermons: partly original, partly selected, and adapted to Village Instruction. By a Clergyman of the Church of England. In 5 vols. 12mo. price 5s. each. *(Sold separately.)*

VINCENT.—Sermons on Practical Subjects. By John Vincent, A.B. late Chaplain to the Establishment at Fort William in Bengal. 8vo. 8s.

WALKER, BP.—Sermons on various Subjects and Occasions. By the Right Rev. James Walker, D.D. of St. John's College, Cambridge, and one of the Bishops of the Scotch Episcopal Church. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

WHITAKER.—A Course of Sermons upon Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. By the late John Whitaker, B.D. Rector of Ruan Lanyhorne, Cornwall. 12mo. 4s. 6d.

WHITE.—Sermons preached at Welbeck Chapel, St. Mary-le-Bone. By the Rev. Thomas White, M.A. Minister of that Chapel. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

WHITTAKER.—Justification by Faith. A Course of Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge, in January, 1825. By the Rev. John W. Whittaker, B.D. Vicar of Blackburn, and late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. 8vo. 5s.

WILLIS.—Sermons for Servants. By the Rev. W. Downes Willis, M.A. Vicar of Kirkby in Cleveland. 12mo. 6s.

WILSON, BP.—Sermons by the late Right Rev. Thomas Wilson, D.D. Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man. 4 vols. 8vo. 1l. 10s.

———————Select Sermons of the Right Rev. Bishop Wilson abridged, and rendered in a familiar, but less colloquial style. By the Rev. Edward Atkyns Bray, B.D. F.A.S. Vicar of Tavistock. 12mo. 4s.

WILSON.—Practical Sermons on Christian Duty. By the Rev. Plumpton Wilson, LL.B. Curate of Shepton Mallet. 2 vols. 8vo. £1. 1s.

WIX.—Practical Sermons on the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, adapted to Family Reading. With two Sermons on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By Samuel Wix, A.M. F.R.S. and A.S. 8vo. 8s. 6d.

WYNYARD.—Sermons on Christian Duties. By Montagu John Wynyard, B.D. Rector of St. Martin's and West Rounton, Yorkshire. 8vo. 12s.

YONGE.—Sermons by the Rev. James Yonge, M.A. late Perpetual Curate of Tormoham and Cockington, Devon. 8vo. 10s.

YOUNG.—Three Sermons on St. Paul's Doctrine of, 1. Justification by Faith; 2. Original Sin; 3. Predestination; with Notes. To the whole is prefixed a Synopsis of the Argument of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. By the Rev. Thomas Young, A.M. Rector of Gilling, late Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge. The Second Edition, revised and enlarged. 8vo. 9s.

THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH;

OR,

AN INQUIRY

INTO THE

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION OF KEEPING HOLY ONE DAY IN SEVEN.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE HOLDEN, A.M.

Ἑορτὴ γὰρ οὐ μιᾶς πόλεως, ἡ χώρας ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ παντός.

PHILO-JUDÆUS, *De Mundi Opificio.*

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL; AND 148, STRAND.

1825.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL

PREFACE.

The sabbath is a subject upon which the opinions of the Christian world are greatly divided. By one party it is deemed a sacred institution, while another maintains that all distinction of days is abolished by Christ. Hence some rest its obligation on expediency alone, others on the authority of ecclesiastical government, and others on the sanction of the Inspired Writings. Nor, among those who ascribe a divine origin to the sabbath, is there a perfect agreement as to the particular day to be kept holy in the septenary division of time; nor whether the Deity requires the dedication of an entire day, or only a part of it.

These are questions, however, of no trifling importance, since it is a fact attested by history and experience, that, in proportion

as the Lord's day is observed or profaned, either in nations or in families, religion is found to flourish or decay. It cannot, indeed, be otherwise, considering on the one hand, how needful a weekly remission of secular employments is to the cultivation of religious principles, and on the other, that true faith is always distinguished by a regular attendance on the hebdomadal offices of devotion. In the complaints, so often heard, of the increasing neglect of the sabbatical duties in this country, there may, perhaps, be more of querulousness than of truth; but the desecration of the Lord's day unquestionably prevails to an alarming extent; and it must be the wish, as it ought to be the endeavour, of every believer in Christ, to suppress an evil of so much magnitude, through a conviction that a stricter observance of this sacred season will be followed, as its natural consequence, by a more devout obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

The design of the performance which the Author now ventures to lay before the public, is to prove the divine institution of a

Weekly Festival, and to point out the manner in which it ought to be sanctified. For this purpose it is attempted to shew that the sabbath was appointed by the Almighty at the close of his stupendous labours in the creation of the world, and that it not only formed a part of each succeeding dispensation of religion, but that it was successively enjoined with still increasing force and authority. After having established the religious obligation of keeping holy one day in seven, it is in the next place attempted to investigate the duties which this obligation imposes.

In the course of the inquiry the terms "sabbath" and "seventh day" are frequently applied, not to the seventh day consecrated to Jehovah under the Jewish economy, but, in a larger sense, to denote the weekly holy-day, whether under the Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian dispensations. This use of the terms, so common with theological writers, is both admissible for the sake of convenience, and justifiable in literal strictness, if the meaning and application of the

fourth commandment, adopted in a subsequent part of this work, be correct.

The annexed List of Writers on the subject of this volume is far from being complete; but the Author considered it right to insert such only as he has had an opportunity of consulting. The insertion of similar lists in his former works has been approved by some to whose judgment he pays the highest deference; and he trusts that the apparent ostentation will be pardoned for the sake of their utility.

It would not gratify the reader to detail the occasion which gave birth to the following Treatise, the researches by which it has swelled to its present size, or the reasons which have induced the Author to submit it to the decision of the public. If "no work was ever spared out of tenderness to the Author," how can the writer of these pages, under whatever circumstances they were composed, expect any exemption from the universal fate of authorship? It were vain to flatter himself that it would stay, much less disarm the uplifted hand of rigorous

criticism, were he to recount the difficulties he has had to struggle with, or the various obstacles which have retarded the progress of his inquiries. He therefore commits his work, such as it is, to the candour of those who take an interest in theological discussions, courting, rather than avoiding, the detection of his errors, and fervently praying that, if he have succeeded in establishing the sanctity of the sabbatical institution, his humble labours may be instrumental, through the divine blessing, to the more general observance of so hallowed a rest.

October, 1825.

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
REC. NOV 1880
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

The political advantages of the Sabbatical Institution 1

CHAPTER II.

The perpetual obligation of the Sabbatical institution proved from its first appointment..... 30

CHAPTER III.

Of the Sabbatical Institution under the Mosaic Dispensation 99

SECTION I.

Of the Jewish Sabbath ..... ibid.

SECTION II.

Inquiry whether the Sabbatical Institution was to survive, or to be abrogated with, Judaism 141

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Sabbatical Institution under the Christian Dispensation 160

SECTION I.

PAGE.

The Sabbatical Institution, so far from being abrogated, is enjoined in the New Testament..... 160

SECTION II.

Of the day of the Christian Sabbath 250

CHAPTER V.

The testimony of the Primitive Church to the Sabbatical Institution 289

CHAPTER VI.

Inquiry into the duties of the Christian Sabbath.... 352

SECTION I.

The Christian Sabbath considered as a day of rest and relaxation..... 361

SECTION II.

The religious observance of the Christian Sabbath .. 396

Conclusion 502

LIST OF AUTHORS

RELATING TO THE SABBATH.

A Dissertation on the Weekly Festival of the Christian Church. 12mo. Lond. 1768.

Altingius, *De Tempore Instituti Sabbathi, inter Opera,* Vol. v. Fol. Amstel. 1687.

Adams, *Religious World Displayed,* Vol. ii. p. 214, et seq. 8vo. Lond. 1823.

Allen, *Modern Judaism,* cap. xix. 8vo. Lond. 1816.

Allix, *Reflections on Scripture,* cap. vii. in Bishop Watson's *Tracts.*

Andrews, *Exposition of the Ten Commandments,* p. 259, et seq. Fol. Lond. 1650.

Athanasius, *Oratio de Sabbatho,* Vol. ii. p. 55, et seq. Paris. 1698.

Albaspinæus, *Observationes de Veteribus Ecclesiæ Ritibus.* 4to. Lutet. Paris. 1623.

Aspinwall, *Abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath.* 4to. Lond. 1657.

Beausobre and L'Enfant, *Introduction to the New Testament,* p. 150, et seq. 8vo. Camb. 1779.

Brown, *Antiquities of the Jews,* Vol. i. p. 556, et seq. 2 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1820.

Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica,* cap. xiv.—xvi. 12mo. Basil. 1680.

Bickersteth, *Treatise on Prayer*, cap. vi.

Burnet *on Church Article VII.* Fol. 1737.

Buddeus, *Instit. Theologiæ Moralis*, P. ii. cap. iii. sect. 2. § 23, et seq. 4to. Lips. 1727.

Barrow, (Dr.) *Works*, Vol. i. p. 523, et seq. Fol. Lond. 1683.

Benson, *Hulsean Lectures for* 1820. Disc. xvi.

Barclay, *Apology*. Prop. 11. § 4. 8vo. Lond. 1780.

Böhmeri, Jo. H. *Diss.* 1. *de Statu Christianorum Die, inter Diss. Juris Ecclesiast.* 12mo. Lips. 1711.

Berrington, *Dissertations on the Mosaical Creation*, Diss. iv. 8vo. Lond. 1750.

Beveridge, *Thesaurus Theologicus*, on John xx. 26. Vol. ii. p. 339. 4 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1711.

Bedford, *Scripture Chronology*, lib. i. cap. i.

Burrow, *Summary of Christian Faith and Practice*, Vol. iii. cap. v. 12mo. Lond. 1822.

Battely, *The Original Institution of the Sabbath*, 8vo. Lond. 1726.

Brerewood, *Treatise of the Sabbath*. 4to. Oxford, 1630.

Byfield, *Doctrine of the Sabbath vindicated against Brerewood*, 4to. London. 1631.

Busfield, (Dr.) *Sermons*. Serm. iii. iv. 8vo. Lond. 1819.

Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*. 2 Vols. Fol. Lond. 1726.

Bramhall, (Archbp.) *Discourse on the Controversies about the Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, in his Works, p. 907, et. seq. Fol. Dublin, 1677.

Burnet, (Dr. Thos.) *Epistola Secunda* annexed to his *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*. 8vo. London, 1733.

Bamfield, *Enquiry whether the Fourth Commandment be Repealed or Altered*. 4to. Lond. 1692.

————, *Reply to Dr. Wallis*. 4to. Lond. 1693.

Capellus, *Disputatio de Sabbatho ap Comm. et Not. Crit. in V. T.* p. 263, et seq. Fol. Amstel, 1689.

Cartwright, *Electa Thargumico-Rabbinica in Exod.* 12mo. London, 1653.

Christian Observer, Vol. i. and the Vol. for 1817.

Cocceius, *De Sabbato, inter Opera*, Vol. ix. Fol. Amstel. 1701.

Calmet, *Dictionary, Art. Sabbath.*

Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, P. 1. cap. 7. 8vo. Lond. 1698.

Curcellæus, *De Usu Sanguinis*, cap. vi.; and *Instit. Relig. Christianæ*, lib. iv. cap. xv. § 11; lib. vii. cap. xxxi. § 11—16. Fol. Amstel. 1675.

Cawdrey and Palmer, *Sabbatum Redivivum; or the Christian Sabbath Vindicated.* 4to. Lond. Four Parts. 1645—1652.

Chafie, *Seventh Day Sabbath; or a Brief Treatise on the Fourth Commandment.* 4to. Lond. 1652.

Calvin, *Institutiones Christianæ Religionis.* Lib. ii. cap. viii. Fol. Argent. 1543.

Clendon, *Serious and Brief Discourse touching the Sabbath Day.* 4to. Lond. 1674.

Cook, *View of Christianity*, lib. ii. sect. ii. cap. x. 3 Vols. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1822.

Doddridge, *Lectures, &c.* Prop. 151. 2 Vols. 8vo. London, 1794.

Danzius, *Christi Curatio Sabbatica Vindicata ex Leg. Judaicis apud Meurchen Nov. Test.* 4to. Lips. 1736.

Delany, *Revelation Examined with Candour*, Vol. iii. cap. i. 8vo. Lond. 1745—63.

Dwight, *Theology*, Serm. cv.—cix. Vol. iv. 5 Vols. Lond. 1821.

Dehon, (Bishop,) *Sermons*, xii—xiv.

Durham, *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, p. 187—307. 4to. Lond. 1675.

Dow, *A Discourse of the Sabbath and Lord's Day.* 4to. 1636.

Edwards, *Survey of the Dispensations of Religion*, cap. i. 8vo. Lond. 1699.

————, *Theologia Reformata*, Vol. ii. p. 440—462. Fol. Lond. 1713.

Fiddes, *Body of Divinity*, Vol. ii. lib. ii. cap. vii.; and lib. iii. cap. v. Fol. Lond. 1718.

Fisher, *Christian Caveat to the Old and New Sabbatarians*. 4to. Lond. 1653.

Gouge, *The Sabbath's Sanctification*. 4to. Lond. 1641.

Goodwin, *Moses et Aaron*. Ed. Hottinger, in *Thesaurus Ugolini*, Vol. iii.

Gregory, *Discourse on the Morality of the Sabbath*. 12mo. 1681.

Gerhardus, *Loci Theologici*, Tom. iii. p. 89—99. Fol. Genevæ, 1639.

Glen, *Treatise on the Sabbath*. 12mo. Edinb. 1802.

Gomerus, *Investigatio Sententiæ et Originis Sabbati atque Institutionis Diei Dominici*. 4to. Groningæ, 1628.

Gill, *Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*, lib. iii. cap. viii. 3 Vols. 4to. Lond. 1769.

Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath*. 4to. Lond. 1636.

Homily on the Time and Place of Prayer.

Horsley, *Sermons*, xxi.—xxiii. 3 Vols. 8vo. Dundee, 1812—1813.

Horne, *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. iii. p. 290, et seq. 4th edit.

———, (Dr. Thomas) *Reflections on the Sabbath*. 8vo. Lond. 1796.

Hallet, *Notes on Scripture*, Vol. iii. Disc. ii. Lond. 1729-1736.

Hall, (Archibald) *Gospel Worship*, Vol. ii. cap. 10. 2 Vols. 12mo. Edinb. 1770.

Hildebrandus, *De Diebus Festis.* 4to. Helmestad. 1701.

Ironside, *Seven Questions of the Sabbath briefly disputed after the manner of the Schools.* 4to. Oxford, 1637.

Jennings, *Antiquities of the Jews*, lib. iii. cap. iii. 2 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1808.

Jahn, *Archæologia Biblica*, § 346, et seq. 8vo. Viennæ, 1814.

Ikenius, *Antiquitates Hebrææ*, P. i. cap. ix. 12mo. Bremæ, 1732.

Jurieu, *Histoire des Dogmes et des Cultes*, P. i. cap. xv.; P. ii. cap. xix. 4to. Amst. 1704.

Jones, *Sermons on the Commandments.* 8vo. Lond. 1818.

Jebb, (Bishop) *Sermons*, vi. and vii. 8vo. Lond. 1824.

Jephson, *Discourse concerning the Religious Observance of the Lord's Day.* 8vo. Lond. 1738.

Kennicott, *Two Dissertations on the Tree of Life, &c.* p. 121, et seq. 8vo. Oxford, 1747.

King, *Morsels of Criticism, Dissertation concerning the Sabbath*, in Vol. iii. 8vo. Lond. 1800.

——, (Lord) *Inquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church.* 8vo. Lond. no date.

Leusden, *Philologus Hebræo-Mixtus*, Diss. xxxv. xxxvi. 4to. Basil, 1739.

Limborch, *Theologia Christiana*, lib. v. cap. xxviii. Fol. Amstel. 1700.

Lightfoot, *Works*, Vol. ii. p. 1321, et seq. et al. 2 Vols. Fol. Lond. 1684.

Levi, (David,) *Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews.* 8vo. Lond. No date.

L'Estrange, *God's Sabbath before the Law, under it, and under the Gospel, briefly Vindicated.* 4to. Camb. 1641.

Loci (Roberti) *Effigiatio Veri Sabbatismi.* 4to. Lond. 1605.

Lewis, *Origines Hebrææ*, lib. iii. cap. xvi. 4 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1724.

The Lord's Day the Sabbath Day. 4to. Lond. 1636.

Lloyd, *Inquiry into what it is to Preach Christ*, p. 126—145. 8vo. Lond. 1825.

Macbeth, *Dissertation on the Sabbath.* 12mo. Glasgow, 1823.

Mede, *Discourse*, xv. *in Works.* Fol. Lond. 1672.

Marckius, *Theol. Christianæ Medulla*, cap. xii. 12mo. Traj. ad Rhen. 1772.

Meyer, *Tractatus de Temporibus Sacris et Festis Diebus Hebræorum, in Thesaurus Ugolini*, Vol. i. P. i. cap. x.

Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, lib. i. cap. x.; lib. ii. cap. vii. 4to. Lond. 1825.

Magee (Archbp.) *On Atonement*, Vol. i. p. 88; Vol. ii. p. 407. 3 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1812-16.

Michaelis, *Commentary on the Laws of Moses.* Art. 94—96. 4 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1814.

Mant, (Miss) *Ingenuous Scruples relating to the Sabbath answered.* 12mo. Lond. 1824.

Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres, Vol. iv. *De la Fête du Septieme Jour, par.* M. l'Abbe Sallier.

Marlow, *Tract on the Sabbath Day.* 4to. Lond. 1693-4.

Owen, *Exercitations on the Sabbath, in Exposit. of Hebrews.* 7 Vols. 8vo. Edinb. 1814.

Orton, (Job) *Six Discourses on the Lord's Day.* 12mo. Shrewsbury, 1769.

Ogden, *Sermons*, Vol. ii. Serm. vii. viii. 8vo. Lond. 1788.

Porteus, (Bishop,) *Lectures on St. Matthew*, Lect. vi. and x.; and *Sermons*, Vol. i. Serm. ix.

Paley, *Moral Philosophy*, lib. v. cap. vi. in *Works*. 5 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1819.

Prideaux, (Bishop,) *Doctrine of the Sabbath*. 4to. Lond. 1634.

Priestley, *Letters to a Young Man, in Reply to Evanson's Objections to the Observance of the Lord's Day*.

Pfeiffer, *Dub. Vex.* Cent. i. Loc. iv. in *Op.* 2 Vols. 4to. Ultraj. 1704.

Placette, *Dissertations sur divers Sujets de Morale et de Theologie*, Diss. iii. 12mo. Amstel. 1704.

Pareau, *Antiquitas Hebraica, breviter delineata*, p. 134, et seq. 8vo. Traj. ad Rhen. 1817.

Ranken, *Institutes of Theology*, p. 625, et seq. 8vo. Glas. 1822.

Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, Quæst. 116. 2 Vols. Fol. Lond. 1731.

Robinson, *Christian System*, Essay lxv. and lxvi. in Vol. iii. 8vo. Lond. 1812.

Rivetus, *Exercit.* 13 *in Gen. et De Decalogo*, Vol. i. *Opera Theol.* 3 Vols. Fol. Roteradami, 1651.

Sellers, *Examination of a late Book Published by Dr. Owen, concerning a Sacred Day of Rest*. 4to. A. D. 1671.

Sprint, *Propositions tending to prove the necessarie Use of the Christian Sabbath*. 4to. London. 1607.

Stillingfleet, *Works*, Vol. ii. p. 166, et seq. 215—217; Vol. iii. p. 662—666. Fol. Lond. 1709.

Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ, or Doctrine of the Sabbath*. 12mo. Lond. 1650.

Spencer, *De Legibus Hebræorum*, lib. i. cap. iv. sect. 7—13. 2 vols. 4to. Leips. 1705.

Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iii. cap. ix. et seq. 4to. Argent. 1665.

Suicer, *Thesaurus in voc.* Σάββατον and Κυριακή. 2 Vols. Fol. Amstel, 1728.

Strauchius, *Breviarium Chronologicum*, lib. i. cap. ii. 8vo. Lond. 1704.

Stackhouse, *Body of Divinity*, P. iii. cap. iv. 3 vols. 8vo. Edinb. 1787.

Sharp, (Archbp.) *Sermons*, xii. xiii. xiv. Vol. iv. 7 Vols. 8vo. Lond. 1717.

Secker (Archbp.) *Sermons*, Vol. vii. Serm. xiv.—xvi. 8vo. Lond. 1795.

Taylor, *Scheme of Christian Divinity*, cap. vi. in Bishop Watson's *Tracts*.

Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, p. 273, et seq. Fol. Lond. 1676.

Twisse, *Morality of the Fourth Commandment*. 4to. Lond. 1641.

Turretin, *Theol.* P. ii. Loc. xi. *De Lege Dei.* Quæst. 13 et 14. 4 Vols. 4to. Traject. 1734.

Taylor, (Jeremy,) *Great Exemplar of Sanctity and Holy Life*, P. ii. Disc. ix.

————, *Ductor Dubitantium*, lib. ii. cap. ii. p. 271, et seq. Fol. Lond. 1671.

Thysius, *De Sabbato et Die Dominico*, apud Synop. Purioris Theologiæ 52 Disput. comprehensa. 12mo. Lug. Bat. 1632.

Voightius, *Diss. de Via Sabbathi ap. Thesaur. Theol. Philol.* Vol. ii. p. 417, et seq.

Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere*, lib. i. P. ii. cap. ii. 2 Vols. 4to. Francq. 1696.

Watts, *Perpetuity of the Sabbath, in Works*, Vol. iii. and *Sermon* l. in Vol. i. 8vo. edit.

Wemyss, *Catechetical Treatise on the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Sabbath.* 18mo. Edinb. 1816.

Willison, *Treatise concerning the Sanctification of the Lord's Day*, in Vol. iv. of *Works*. 8vo. Edinb. 1816.

Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satana*, P. i. p. 558, et seq. 4to. Altdorf-Noric, 1681.

Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*. 12mo. Lond. 1726.

Walæus, *Dissertatio de Sabbato, inter Opera*, Vol. i. p. 275, et seq. 2 Vols. Fol. Lug. Bat. 1643.

Wood, *Mosaic History of the Creation Illustrated*, cap. ix. 8vo. Lond. 1818.

Walther, *Diss. de Itinere Sabbathi ap. Thesaur. Theol. Philol.* Vol. ii. p. 423, et seq.

Wotton, *Translation of Misna, Title Shabbath*. 8vo. Lond. 1718.

Wallis, *Defence of the Christian Sabbath*, 4to. Oxford, 1692. Part ii. 1693.

Witsius, *Œconomia Fœderum*, lib. i. cap. vii. 4to. Traject, 1694.

White, (Bishop) *Treatise of the Sabbath Day*. 4to. Lond. 1635.

——-, *Examination of a "Briefe Answer to the Treatise of the Sabbath Day."* 4to. Lond. 1637.

Zanchius, *De Quarto Præcepto*, in Tom. iv. Operum. Fol. 1617.

ERRATA.

PAGE

10, line 6 *from bot. read,* the level of that of the uncultivated.
110, note, l. 4 *from bot.* for *Judric* read *Judaic.*
112. l. 14, *for* was made *read* might be made.
138, note (f), l. 3, *for* p. 45 *read* p. 54.
142, note (c), *for* Mullus *read* Nullus.
153, l. 1. *for* sixty-fifth *read* fifty-sixth.
187, note, l. 7, *for* far *read* for.
199, note (a), *for* Schoff *read* Schott.
202, note (f), *last line, for* sect. ii. *read* Lect. ii.
255, l. 9, *for* whole *read* world.
327, l. 20, *for* every place *read* in every place.
351, l. 5 *from bot. for* by *read* of.
352, l. 15, *for* to paid *read* to be paid.
445, *last line, for* which *read* of which.
501, l. 14, *for* have determined *read* have not determined.

PRINCETON
REG. NOV 1880
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

CHAPTER I.

The Political advantages of the Sabbatical Institution.

If the sabbath be contemplated only in a political point of view, it will appear to be founded in wisdom and benevolence. So beneficial are its effects upon the civil condition of man, that the philanthropist will find it difficult, even in imagination, to conceive any institution better adapted to promote the happiness of our species. The great mass of every nation being compelled, by the unalterable law of nature, to engage in the various employments of life, existence would cease to be a blessing, were they subjected, by rigorous necessity, to incessant labour. Some respite there must be, some cessation of worldly toil; and by what means can this object be more effectually obtained than by the observance of the sabbath? Without encroaching too much upon the business of the world, it affords just such a periodical rest as is sufficient for the reno-

vation of wearied nature. On one day in the week the labourer and the husbandman relax from their hardy toils, the artist and the mechanic withdraw from their several occupations, the tradesman and merchant retire from the anxieties and cares of business; and, while these are allowed a repose so necessary for the refreshment of their bodies, all ranks gain a breathing time from their wonted avocations, a time for innocent relaxation, a time for the cultivation of their moral and intellectual powers.

Circumstanced as mankind are in this mortal state; doomed, with few exceptions, to manual labour, or to pursue occupations still more painful and fatiguing, what can be a wiser or more merciful ordination, than the appointment of every seventh day for ease and relaxation? To those who are necessitated to toil for subsistence, it brings a weekly returning rest most grateful and refreshing; contributing to the amelioration of their hard condition, and, if rightly used, to the improvement of their spiritual natures. Some, indeed, there are, favoured individuals, the children of rank and wealth, to whom the sabbatical rest affords no relief, and in whose bosoms it produces no sensations of delight. Lulled upon the lap of smiling fortune, and surrounded with whatever ministers to luxurious enjoyment, every morning awakens them to ease and indulgence.

But far different is the state of the industrious poor, whose health and vigour would waste away in hopeless misery, if they were allowed no cessation from labour. To them the seasons of recreation, by affording a respite from toil, become the source of contentment and cheerfulness. With what transport do they hail the recurrence of the sabbath, which invites them to relax from the fatigues of their employments? By this refreshment of the body, and exhilaration of the spirits, they are enabled to fulfil the duties of their stations with alacrity and joy. Their occupations, however laborious and wearisome, are alleviated by these intervals of rest; even while bending under the burden of their allotted task, they are cheered with the anticipation of the sunday enjoyment; and content sits smiling upon those faces which, without such relaxation would be gloomy, and furrowed with murmuring dissatisfaction.

Vastly as the sabbath contributes to the sum of human happiness, it has been censured by some as a grievous interruption to the business of the world. But such persons are actuated by erroneous views of their own interest, as well as of the principles of human nature. As the most robust constitutions would sink under incessant labour, occasional recreation is absolutely necessary to that sound state of the animal powers

which is required for great or persevering exertions. Whatever, therefore, conduces to the health and vigour of the body, it at the same time augments the means of human industry; and the labourer renews his toils with alacrity after a day's rest, inasmuch as he returns to it with renovated strength. The sabbath also, by adding to his comforts, renders him cheerful and resigned, and experience proves the superiority of those exertions which spring from a willing and contented mind. But if the quantum of productive labour were diminished by a septenary rest, it would make no difference in a pecuniary point of view, for the diminution being universal, would only enhance the price of labour, while every article would retain its relative value. If sunday were now made a day of labour, it would have no other effect than to reduce the price, for, as the demand for labour would remain the same, the labourer would only obtain the same wages whether he worked six or seven days in the week, while in other respects he would be a material sufferer by the change[a]. Even if some mercantile disadvantages do arise from a weekly festival, who that wishes the happiness of the poor man would consent to its abolition? Vilely selfish must that man be who

[a] Ranken, *Institutes of Theology*, cap. x. Sect. 1.; Dr. Paley, *Moral and Political Philosophy*, lib. v. cap. 6.

would promote his interest at the expense of another's: cruel must that heart be which, for the sake of a little filthy lucre, would sacrifice the comfort of a fellow-creature.

In all civilized nations there have been appointed seasons in which the people rested from their diversified occupations, and devoted themselves to ease and amusement. On such occasions it has been the universal practice to dedicate some portion of time to the celebration of sacred rites; and wherever the worship of a Deity has obtained, there have been festive days accompanied with the solemnities of religion [b]. Among the Greeks and Romans the public festivals in honour of their gods were numerous and splendid. The shops were shut, the courts of judicature were closed, the rustic, the mechanic, the tradesman ceased from their employments, and the citizens, intermitting their secular cares, gave a loose to mirth and festivity. They were entertained with various and magnificent exhibitions, with shows, games, processions, and all the pageantry of a glittering and expensive, but degrading idolatry. Whether originating in superstition, or political expediency, they prove that heathen legislators were convinced of the utility

[b] Feriarum Festorumque solemnitates adeo cum cultu numinis conjunctæ sunt, ut ubicumque hunc ibi et illas inveniamus. Witsius, *Ægyptiaca*, lib. II. cap. xvi. Sec. 3. I.

of granting seasons of rest and relaxation to the people. Some of the sages of antiquity hesitate not to regard them as the especial boon of the gods, who, in pity to the laborious classes, had granted these stated and solemn remissions of labour. "The Gods, says Plato, pitying the human race, born to toil, appointed the recurrence of the festivals dedicated to the gods for the remission of human labour[c]." Unceasing daily toil is so prejudicial to health, and so destructive to the happiness of existence, that no rulers in any country, or in any age, have been sufficiently barbarous to enjoin it.

Yet the pagan festivals, considered merely in reference to necessary recreation, were decidedly inferior to the institution of the sabbath. Their multitude was not so much calculated to refresh exhausted nature, as to invite to an indolent licentiousness. Archbishop Potter enumerates above three hundred Grecian festivals; and, though, they were not all observed by each state, every district having some peculiar to it, yet they must have been in all places far more numerous

c Θεοι δε οικτειραντες το των ανθρωπων επιπονον πεφυκος γενος, αναπαυλας τε αυτοις των πονων εταξαντο, τας των εορτων αμοιβας τοις Θεοις. Plato, *De Legibus*, lib. II. p. 59. ed. Bipont. "Legum conditores Festos instituerunt dies, ut ad hilaritatem homines publice cogerentur, tanquam necessarium laboribus interponentes temperamentum." Seneca, *De Tranquil. Animi*, vol. I. p. 385. 8vo. Amstel. 1672. See also Cicero *De Legibus*, lib. II. § 19.

than could be serviceable for the purpose of relaxation. In Rome they had, in process of time, so multiplied as to take up a great part of the year, to the serious injury of the public; for which reason the emperor Claudius found it expedient to abridge their number[d]. Not only their frequency, but the length of time which several of them continued, was injurious both to the health and the morals of the people. Some of them lasted two or three days, and even for a longer period: and, as few things are more enervating than a continuance of festive mirth and jollity, they must have had a prejudicial effect upon the body. This must have been the inevitable consequence of such as were kept in the night time. The morning no doubt arose upon the votaries pale and sickly after the riot of the midnight orgies. Such festivals as were held in the light of day were for the most part of a demoralizing tendency, being celebrated with superstitious and idolatrous rites, and not unfrequently with an unprincipled and disgusting licentiousness. Occurring also at intervals of various duration, they were destitute of that which forms one great excellence in the sabbatical institution,—its regular and stated recurrence. Days of casual leisure and rest can

[d] Adam, *Roman Antiquities*, p. 339.

neither be provided with any established duty, nor sanctified by any public sense of religion; and are therefore usually consumed in criminal pursuits and indulgences. But the sabbath returns at the expected time, bringing with it a stated employment of a sacred nature, and furnishing the labouring classes with a day of rest, most refreshing after the labour of the preceding six, and long enough to recruit their strength and spirits for a renewal of their employments. Nor ought it to be forgotten that the condition of slaves was but little ameliorated by the Greek and Roman festivals, as, with the exception of the Saturnalia, there were very few on which they were absolved from work [e].

The Mohammedans, convinced of the utility of setting apart one day in the week for attendance upon the worship of God, have selected the sixth, or friday. Different reasons have been assigned for pitching upon this day, but the most probable is, that it was for the sake of distinguishing the followers of the Arabian impostor from the Jews and Christians. The Mohammedan writers bestow extraordinary encomiums on this day, calling it "the prince of days," "the most excellent day on which the sun rises," and believing it to be the

[e] Cato, *De Re Rustica*, cap. II.; Seneca, *Epist.* 47. Virgil, *Georg.* I. v. 267.

day on which the work of creation was finished, and that it will be the day on which the last judgment is to be solemnized. "The Mohammedans, says Sale, do not think themselves bound to keep their day of public worship so holy as the Jews and Christians are certainly obliged to keep theirs, there being a permission as is generally supposed in the Korân[f], allowing them to return to their employments or diversions after divine service is over; yet the more devout disapprove the applying any part of that day to worldly affairs, and require it to be wholly dedicated to the business of the life to come[g]."

It is not one of the least among the many advantages of the sabbath, that it has a tendency to advance the social and intellectual character of man. Its effects in this respect, though extensive as the limits of society, are most apparent among those ranks where its influence is most wanted,—the industrious poor. In the cottages of those who subsist upon the produce of their manual labour it creates a feeling of comfort and contentment, of quiet and pleasurable repose, which is the parent of gentle and civilized manners. Its weekly recurrence produces habits of order and regularity,

[f] Chap. 63.

[g] *Prel. Discourse to the Koran*, Sect. 7. See *Koran*, cap. 62.; Pocock, *Specimen Hist. Arab.* p. 307. ed. White, Oxon. 1806.; D'Herbelot, *Biblioth. Orientale* in voc. AID AND GIUMAAT.

favourable to the due subordination which must exist in every well-governed state. On the sabbath each cottage assumes its neatest trim; the inmates put off their ordinary garb, every individual being anxious to appear in their best apparel; and the love of dress, sometimes indeed absurd, and sometimes culpable, yet in the degree it obtains among the poor is generally a stimulus to frugality, cleanliness, and industry. The cottager, resting from his toils, and adorned in his best attire, feels himself raised in the order of being; he becomes of more importance in his own estimation; he sees in himself the dignity of human nature; feelings always to be encouraged in connection with religious principle, inasmuch as they are instrumental to the moral and intellectual advancement of the species.

It is impossible, as it should seem, to raise the lower orders in the scale of civilization, without providing them with the opportunity of a frequent disengagement of mind. If the attention were constantly fixed upon one, and, generally speaking, dull occupation, the mind, from want of excitement, would seldom rise above the level of the uncultivated barbarian. The faculties, being ever limited to one routine of objects, would be incapable of enlarging their intellectual sphere, and by consequence incapable of intellectual improvement. But the sabbath provides a remedy

for this danger, and, by withdrawing attention from the drudgery of worldly employments, gives ample scope for the exercise of the mental powers. A new train of thought is excited, which circumstance is of itself a means of arousing the energies of man. The current of ideas, which, flowing continually in one and the same course, benumbs every faculty of the soul, is diverted into a different and pleasing channel. The very change is awakening, and the mind, through the excitement of a pleasurable emotion, opens and expands with unshackled freedom. The intellect is invigorated by whatever rouses it from the torpor of a uniform train of thought. Nor is this excitation the only advantage; the multiplied means of instruction afforded by the sabbath must operate extensively in the moral culture of the people. Supplying a grateful relief to the body, it stimulates the mind to activity, and to such activity as promotes the civilities of social intercourse. Combining all these things together, it would be difficult to point out aught which has a more powerful influence in urging on the career of national improvement.

But the greatest benefit of the sabbath, and that which renders it a real blessing, is its being destined to moral and religious edification. Of all important matters the most important, and of all needful concerns the most needful, is religion.

Amid the diversified ranks of society, and through all the chequered scenes of life, from the monarch to the mendicant, from the cradle to the grave, it is the vivifying principle of spiritual health and enjoyment. Without the softening influence of religion, the great and powerful become the scourges of the human race, capricious in their tyranny, licentious in their cruelty, implacable in their revenge. Without religion the active and aspiring press onwards, unrestrained in their pursuits, boastful of honour, yet as much the slaves of selfishness as obsequious to the whirlwind of their passions. Without religion the learned and contemplative but abuse their powers; whether penetrating the mines of science, or exploring the regions of literature, in heart they are unsanctified; their intellectual ken, though piercing the confines of illimitable space, never soaring to heaven; and in their most admired researches, in their proudest attainments, diffusing a poison the more deadly as it is the more subtile, and the more dangerous by being disguised among the flowers plucked from the gardens of learning. Where religion is wanting, all is wanting that dignifies man, all that ennobles his nature by unequivocal distinction, above the herds that graze the field, or that roam the forest.

To preserve a sense of religion upon the mind, and to foster its influence, which is apt to be

subdued by the distractions of the world, some portion of time must be dedicated to sacred offices. Were this omitted, the voice sounding forth in such sweet and soothing accents in the word of God would be drowned amid the clamour of earthly occupations. The evangelic call would be made in vain to men wholly immersed in care and business, or giddy with the incessant round of amusement and voluptuousness. Opportunity, then, must be afforded both for the religious instruction of the many, and for the renewal of those holy impressions which, even in the sincerely pious, would decay in an uninterrupted intercourse with the world. In this pilgrimage of life it is no easy task to preserve an abiding sense of religion, and to acquire a heavenly-mindedness while surrounded with so many things to retard the Christian's progress. The world is ever stealing in upon the affections, pleasure allures, interest tempts, cares perplex; a variety of objects which lie around in gay and enticing profusion, find too ready an entrance into the heart; and the soul, even in its very aspirations to Heaven, is often compelled to struggle against the intrusion of the senses. Every candidate in the Christian race must have experienced this; and is it too much to infer that, if the weekly day appointed for the spiritual nourishment of the soul were rendered common, scarcely any would persevere

in the prescribed course? Is it too much to believe that the flame of piety, which, under all advantages, is not kept alive without difficulty, would in that case expire, or at least burn faintly in the heart?

Happy, then, is it for the frail children of the dust that the law separates a stated portion of time for solemn and religious offices. It is a valuable privilege, which those who are hastening in earnest towards the celestial Zion will accept with feelings of grateful joy. It supplies a spiritual refreshment to the soul, encumbered as it is, in this stage of existence, by the burden of the flesh, and the traitorous solicitation of the world. While travelling the journey of life, whether the path lie through a bleak and barren waste, or through verdure and flowers, mankind, unless frequently reminded of the end and object of their pursuit, would faint under the difficulties to which they are exposed. On the seventh day they are so reminded; on that day they are cautioned of the danger of loitering in the way; the all-glorious reward of victory is laid before them, and they are exhorted to press forward towards the mark for the prize of their high calling in Christ. On that day they are invited to lay aside the thoughts and cares which distract the mind, to rest from the turmoil of busy life, and to devote the sacred hours to the concerns upon which an eternity

depends. Recalled from the fascinations of what pleases only to betray, they are admonished to raise their contemplations to that which is most worthy of all love, and veneration, and praise,—the Tri-une Deity. In the appointed ordinances of religion, in public worship, in private prayer and meditation, the soul enjoys devout communion with its Creator, and extends its view beyond the limits of visible nature. The exercises of a pure devotion, while they withdraw the affections from earth, cherish the ardour of exalted piety; and, while they animate the holy desires of the heart, teach it to confide in that plan of redemption which, in the councils of eternal mercy, has opened the gates of Heaven to mankind.

The object for which the seventh-day festival was ordained, the associations which it excites, the solemnities with which it is accompanied, are well adapted to disengage the mind from the vanities of the passing scene. "The very rest," says a pagan writer, "withdraws the mind from human occupations, and turns it towards God[h]." The weekly return of sacred ministrations must have some effect, transient as it unfortunately too often is, in awakening, even in the most careless, sentiments of seriousness and piety. With those

[h] Ἥτε γαρ ἀνεσις τον νουν ἀπαγει ἀπο των ἀνθρωπινων ἀσχοληματων, τον δε οὑτως νουν τρεπει προς τον Θειον. Strabo, *Geogr.* lib. x. p. 717. fol. Amstel. 1707.

who are formed in a softer mould, who are blessed with finer feelings and purer sentiments, it must be greatly influential. How is it possible for those who are endowed with ordinary sensibility, to behold the holy preparations of the sabbath without some serious thoughts arising in the mind? The noise of rustic labour ceases, the din of mercantile tumult is hushed, the shops and marts of business are closed, and the opened gates of the temples of our God invite the multitudes who crowd the streets to assemble in the consecrated precincts. Who can witness so many human beings congregating together for the purpose of divine worship, without feeling a desire to join in paying adoration to the Sovereign Lord? He who can be a cold and unmoved spectator of thousands of his fellow-creatures assembling to celebrate their Creator's praise, must possess a heart but little susceptible of any gentle and virtuous impulse.

"I have often heard it remarked," says an eloquent writer, "by Christians of a serious and devout disposition, to whom the sacred day of rest had become, through habit and principle, a season of hallowed delight, that it seemed to their eyes as if, on the sabbath, the sun did shine more bright, the works of God appear more beautiful, the fields more fresh, the flowers more sweet, and all the face of nature to wear an unusual and a

fitting stillness. It is not that the sun does shine more bright, or that the fields are indeed more fresh, or the flowers more sweet upon this than upon any other day. It is only that we are apt to think thus, because our minds are attuned to order, and to piety, and to contemplation. It is because our hearts are harmonized by the general repose and regularity around us. We look upon the joyful countenance of man, we hear no strife, we see no sorrow; labour is at an end, quietness is upon the scene, and our affections are weaned from earthly, and fixed upon heavenly things. The goodness of God and the beauty of holiness force themselves into our thoughts, and in the fulness of the feeling we almost fancy that the inanimate creation has been taught to sympathize with the benevolence of our souls, and to remember, like ourselves, the sabbath of God. This is mere imagination; but then it is a godly imagination, and, God forbid, that by pointing out the cause of the delusion, I should rob the amiable mind of any Christian of a pleasing sentiment which he would wish to cherish, and which cannot possibly be productive of any evil effects[h]."

These feelings, indeed, depend much upon the strength of imagination, and constitutional sensibility, and cannot, therefore, be laid down as a test whereby it may be known whether the heart

[h] Benson, *Hulsean Lectures for* 1820, Disc. 16.

has a proper relish of spiritual things. Many sincere Christians there doubtless are who have never been touched by feelings of this description; yet they are so allied to piety and virtue that the bosom in which they dwell will rarely be a stranger to the sentiments of religion. Permit me, then, to address a few questions to those into whose hands these pages may fall. Have you felt no emotion of delight when present at the consecrated rites of religion? Have you heard the bell's solemn invitation to Church without a wish to unite with your brethren in prayer and thanksgiving? Have you witnessed the quiet of the town, the tranquillity of the village on the sabbath morn, and not felt your bosoms swell with philanthropic joy? Have you beheld the rustics assembling from the scattered hamlets, or the city's throng crowding to the temples of the Lord, and not winged a thought to Heaven? If you have done this, look well into your hearts, for there is some cause to suspect that all is not right within. To be unmoved with what is most calculated to move, to be unaffected with what is best adapted to affect, *generally*, it must not be said *always*, bespeaks the callousness of a heart as yet unsoftened by religion. If it be found upon examination to proceed, not from constitutional apathy, but from carnal insensibility to divine things, rouse your dormant powers; awake

from your spiritual lethargy; apply to the instituted means of grace, and the commencement of a Christian course will be the commencement of new views, warmer affections, and brighter hopes. Those holy offices, once your aversion and distaste, will become your most transporting delight. Ere long you will be glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the house of the Lord; and the morning which ushers in the sabbath will wake you to enjoyment, because it will wake you to the service of your God.

Let the careless and the gay, arising from their dream of levity, bestow a few moments to seriousness and reflection. Such not unfrequently have minds acutely sensitive, which only require proper culture to glow with the warmest feelings of devotion. There are those among them whose thoughts are dissipated by the world's allurements, while their hearts are strangers to base principles, who are giddy through health and fortune rather than corrupt, and who have a native bent to the sedate virtues which they neglect. Let such be invited to pause, to contemplate with attention the sabbatical observances, and their minds will probably be roused from the slumber of indifference. Theirs is not the soul to remain untouched by that which is so well fitted to call forth the deepest interest; nor is theirs the heart that can witness the orisons of piety without catching some por-

tion of its fervour. Impelled by the excitement of the moment to join the congregation of the faithful, the virtuous impression may be confirmed, and a transitory emotion converted into a permanent habit of religion.

Say not that these are visionary notions, the day-dreams of one who suffers his reason to be led away by a heated imagination. The customs and solemnities connected with the seventh-day festival must operate with some efficacy; and most minds of the ordinary construction can, from experience, attest their influence. Numbers, it is true, behold with frigid indifference the rites and ceremonies which are wisely ordained to hallow the Lord's-day. They make no impression upon hearts hardened with vice, or a benumbing attachment to the world. Yet though often disregarded, they are often effectual, often the happy means of recalling wandering souls to the worship and service of God. The children of idleness and levity are lured to the sacred ordinances, in attending which the good seed that is sown not unfrequently takes root, and through the divine mercy shooting up, bears the acceptable fruits of righteousness and peace. Instances there are, and not very uncommon, of those who coming to mock, remained to pray; and thousands can testify that their first serious impressions were received in the courts of the Lord's house,

to which they had repaired in compliance with custom, or from curiosity, or from motives still more unworthy. Out of the multitudes of those who are attracted, by various causes, to the public services of the Church, not a few carry away minds more sedate, and affections more pure than those which they brought to the house of God. Principles are imbibed not easily forgotten, which reflection serves to confirm, and which, watered by the dew of heavenly grace, produce the happiest results. The example of believers employed in devout exercises is powerful over every bosom not destitute of sympathetic feelings; and the sacred impressions, however slight, by being often repeated, are tributary to the growth of a true and lively faith. A due respect for human nature, and a proper reliance on the efficacy of divine grace, forbid us to believe that the outward services of religion are ever wholly in vain.

The mode of celebrating the sabbath, in all Protestant countries at least, furnishes the most valuable instruction on the most important subjects. The frequent enforcement of divine truths is useful, perhaps necessary to all, since all are apt, unless repeatedly admonished, to neglect the concerns of eternal moment; but to very many the sabbatical ministrations afford the chief, and not unfrequently, the only means of edification. If this source of information were abolished, im-

mense multitudes would remain ignorant of what they are most interested to know. Without days of rest, public worship, and a stated ministry appointed to inculcate the doctrines of Revelation, the mass of mankind would remain in a state of deplorable spiritual darkness. Under the blessing of God they are the medium of diffusing the light of the Gospel, which is now so gloriously beaming in the Christian world. Abolish them, and an impervious mist and gloom would soon spread around; the sense of moral and religious obligation would wear away, or be obliterated; and the flame of pure religion, which now burns brightly among the inhabitants of the earth, would at no distant period languish and expire.

The moral good produced by the consecration of the seventh day, is not confined to those who attend the holy ordinances, but extends to such even as neglect or refuse to participate in them. The general tone of moral feeling is exalted by the universal knowledge that it is a day sacred to the Supreme Being. It is not spent like other days of the week, there being few, if any, who do not distinguish it by some difference of dress, of occupation, or of amusement, the effect of which is not limited to their political advantages; but has an influence upon the heart, inasmuch as all are thus habituated to order and decency, and are reminded of concerns more important than

those of the world. Intensely as many are devoted to pleasure, they are compelled, from a regard to public decorum, to pursue it on the Lord's sabbath-day in a more sober and private manner than they would if this restraint were dissolved. The sports and pastimes of the people are mainly exempt from the noisy revelry and mirth to which mere secular festivals give occasion. As there must be days of rest and relaxation for those who subsist by manual labour, it is of incalculable benefit to surround them with a sacredness so favourable to a temperate enjoyment of them. The example also of that class who celebrate the sabbath with exemplary devotion, forms a powerful check to the open profligacy of the dissolute. Vice may ridicule virtue, but cannot despise it; and those who are restrained by no sense of conscience or religion, are often awed by fear of a class so powerful by their numbers, and so respectable in character. Considering these things it cannot be doubted that the sabbath contributes greatly to produce and maintain the high standard of moral conduct which prevails in this happy land, but which would be lowered whenever either public law, or public opinion shall suffer this institution to be profaned or violated.

If we calmly reflect upon the benefits of the sabbatical institution, the salutary rest and recreation it affords, the means it furnishes for the

public worship of God, and for religious edification, its influence on the social and intellectual character of man, its instrumentality in cherishing a rational piety, its fitness to awaken the careless and indifferent to a sense of spiritual things, its influence in restraining much vice and profligacy, in preserving decency and order, and in exalting the general tone of public morals, we cannot hesitate to pronounce the good derived from it to be incalculable in amount.

Such are the advantages which rational and accountable creatures derive from the institution of a weekly festival. To it may be ascribed one of the principal secondary causes of the great influence which genuine Christianity has obtained in this country. If it be wise to allow a refreshing rest to the labouring classes; if it be kind to furnish religious instruction to the careless and ignorant; and if it be salutary to recal, at stated periods, the attention of all from things finite to things infinite, to impress upon their minds the importance of revealed truth, and to admonish them of their duties as responsible beings, and their obligations as Christians, the observance of the sabbath must be a high and imperious duty. With this duty, all will cheerfully comply who are anxious to promote the temporal and eternal interests of their fellow-creatures. It can be no light offence to disregard an institution, the

source of so many benefits to man; moral, intellectual, and religious. If the philosophic observer were called upon to name the institution most conducive to the happiness of the human race, to the interests of religion and morality, he would, by a comparison with every other, indisputably fix upon that of the sabbath. Let all, then, by authority, by precept, by example, endeavour, to the extent of their power, to enforce the strict observance of this holy rest. Let every friend of his species, every lover of God, keep it, both in his own person and in those of his domestics, as far as possible inviolate, not only from occupations which may be avoided, but also from those earthly thoughts and cares which interfere with the spiritual improvement of so hallowed a season.

To this conclusion the legislator, who judges of all institutions in the balance of political expediency, must be led in contemplating the multiplied blessings of the sabbath. But it remains a very important question how far it is supported by the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Were its origin merely human, it would indeed be obligatory to observe it on account of its influence in augmenting the comforts, and exalting the moral character of mankind; but this obligation would only rest upon the same grounds as

the duty of obedience to the political institutions of the land. Though it might be regarded with the respect and deference to which all human laws are entitled, it would nevertheless be destitute of that force and influence which belong to whatever is stamped with the authority of Holy Writ. It is desirable, however, that an ordinance of such manifest utility should be fortified with a sacredness of character which may ensure a conscientious and permanent compliance.

It is the tenet of mystic Quakerism, that God is not to be worshipped through the intervention of a ministry, of formal ceremonies, or of typical institutions, but by a simply spiritual worship, and of course that one day is not more holy than another[k]. By the Unitarians also several objections are urged against the religious observance of stated days. "To a true Christian, says a writer of this school, every day is a sabbath, every place is a temple, and every action of life an act of devotion. A Christian is not required to be more holy, nor permitted to take greater liberties upon one day than upon another. Whatever is lawful or expedient upon any one day of the week is, under the Christian dispensation, equally lawful and expedient upon any other day." Again, "I have

[k] Barclay, *Apology*, Prop. II. § 4.; Gurney, *Observations on the religious Peculiarities of the Society of Friends*, cap. iv.

no hesitation in asserting, that under the Christian dispensation 'every day is alike.' Of public worship I am a sincere advocate; and it having been the uniform practice of the Christian church to assemble for this purpose on the first day of the week, I highly approve of the continuance of this laudable and useful custom. But that under the Christian dispensation one day is more holy than another, or that any employment, or any amusement, which is lawful on other days, is unlawful on the sunday, can never be proved either from the Christian scriptures or from ecclesiastical antiquity[1]." Not far remote from this low and

[1] Belsham, *Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise*, p. 15. 107. edit. 3. A much more sober theologian asserts, "In Novo Testamento omne dierum discrimen abolitum est, nec ullus dies altero sanctior." (Limborch, *Theologia Christiana*, lib. v. cap. xxviii. § 7.) Another theologian of the same school observes, "Sub Novo Fœdere omne dierum discrimen est abolitum, ita ut unum altero sanctiorem per se habere superstitionem resiperet." (Curcellæus, *Relig. Christianæ Instit.* lib. vii. cap. xxxi. § 11. See to the same effect, Grotius, *Confessio Fidei Augustana*, § 7. Opera vol. iv. p. 549.) Yet neither of these writers deny that a certain distinction of days is authorized under the Christian dispensation, "Discrimen quod ponitur inter dies ordinis causa, et propter conventus sacros, non esse sublatum: necessarium enim est in ecclesia." (Curcellæus, *De Usu Sanguinis*, cap. vi. p. 957.) A writer of great erudition, and to whom we are indebted for an admirable edition of the fragments of the ante-nicene Christian Fathers, observes, "Qui enim dies veteri

degrading notion of the sabbath is that very generally held by the Romanists, and by not a few Protestant divines, which rests it upon the authority of the church. The only difference seems to be, that the Unitarian grounds it merely upon expediency, while they make it rest upon the uniform custom and practice of the ancient catholic church: the one reduces it to a mere human institution, the other regards it as one of those ritual observances which Christ hath left power to his church to ordain. The third opinion is, that it is a divine institution, and consequently of universal and indispensable obligation. He who reflects how much the due observance of it contributes to the present and future happiness of man, must wish that opinion true which enforces it with the sanction of divine authority. Now its religious obligation must arise from its being enjoined in the Word of God; hence it is

fœdere sanctificatus colitur, is septimus, non primus est: atque in Novo Testamento nihil de cultu cujusquam dici substituti in sabbati locum præcipitur, nedum aliud aliquod sabbatum instituitur." He concludes, however, with saying, "Restat autem nobis, non sabbatum quidem, quia deletum atque abrogatum est, sed dies vetustissima consuetudine et perpetuo ecclesiæ consensu observatus, dies dominicæ resurrectionis, quo cultum Dei, ipsi et lege naturæ debitum, publice celebramus." Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iv. p. 384.

incumbent upon the Christian to enquire whether the sabbath is of divine appointment, and whether the page of Revelation points out in what manner it is to be kept holy; an enquiry which it is attempted to prosecute in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

The perpetual Obligation of the Sabbath, proved from its first Institution.

In opening the Word of God we find at the beginning of the second chapter the following account of the first institution of the sabbath: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made[a]." The accuracy of the authorized version

[a] Gen. ii. 1—3. As it is evident both from the first chapter, and various other parts of Scripture that the whole of creation was finished on the sixth day, several commentators adopt the reading of the Samaritan, Syriac, and Septuagint; "And on the *sixth* day God ended his work which he had made." But this emendation is not authorized by MSS. and moreover is not required, for if the verb יכל be understood, not in the per-

of the Hebrew text is attested by the whole stream of translators, all of whom, with minute verbal differences, accord substantially in sense. What, then, are we taught by this part of the narrative? Does it imply the moral and perpetual obligation of the sabbath? This is the question which we are now to examine.

Now if the sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation, it is reasonable to infer that it is obligatory upon all mankind. Our first parents were the only human beings in existence, and an ordinance appointed for them, in no respect limited to the paradisiacal state, must surely have been designed to extend also to their posterity. This, as it seems, is universally conceded[b]; but it is proper to guard against the inference, that, if it was not appointed at the creation, the account in Genesis will *not* render the observance of the sabbath binding upon the whole human race. Supposing it to have been first ordained in the

fect tense "he ended," but in the plusquam-perfect "he had ended," the difficulty is obviated. Besides the commentators see Pfeiffer, *Dubia Vexata*, Cent. i. loc. 4. where the various opinions of the critics are enumerated.

[b] "If the divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed no doubt to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it." Paley, *Moral and Political Philosophy*, lib. v. cap. vii. So Limborch, *Theologia Christiana*, lib. v. cap. xxviii. § 7.

age of Moses, it may nevertheless be designed for universality. There may be, and, as we shall see afterwards, actually are reasons, shewing that the divine command recorded by Moses, *whenever* delivered, is of universal obligation. Hence the question of *time* involves another, namely, the question of *extent*, that is, whether the command was given by the Supreme Governor to a select people only, or was addressed to all mankind who come to the knowledge of it. If, however, it can be satisfactorily proved that the command was given at the creation, and that, independently of this circumstance, there are reasons shewing it not to be limited to the Israelitish nation, it must still remain in force, unless abrogated by a subsequent revelation.

Among those who have held that the Pentateuchal record above-cited is proleptical, and that the sabbath is to be considered a part of the peculiar laws of the Jewish polity, no one has displayed more ability than Dr. Paley. Others on the same side have exhibited far more extensive learning, and have exercised much more patient research; but for acuteness of intellect, for coolness of judgment, and a habit of perspicacious reasoning he has been rarely, if ever, excelled. The arguments which he has approved must be allowed to be the chief strength of the cause; and, as he is at once the most judicious and most

popular of its advocates, all that he has advanced demands a careful and candid examination. The doctrine which he maintains is, that the sabbath was not instituted at the creation; that it was designed for the Jews only; that the *assembling* upon the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship, is a law of Christianity, of divine appointment; but that the *resting* on it longer than is necessary for attendance on these assemblies, is an ordinance of human institution; binding nevertheless upon the conscience of every individual of a country in which a weekly sabbath is established, for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes, and recommended perhaps in some degree to the Divine approbation, by the resemblance it bears to what God was pleased to make a solemn part of the law which he delivered to the people of Israel, and by its subserviency to many of the same uses. Such is the doctrine of this very able writer in his *Moral and Political Philosophy;* a doctrine which places the sabbath on the footing of civil laws, recommended by their expediency, and which, being sanctioned by so high an authority, has probably given great encouragement to the lax notions concerning the sabbath which unhappily prevail. I design therefore to examine every thing he has advanced in defence of it; but in the present chapter I

shall confine myself to a review of his arguments in proof of the position that the sabbath was not instituted at the creation, but in the wilderness for the Jews only; adding thereto such as appear deserving of consideration, collected from Selden, Spencer, Rivetus, Limborch, Curcellæus, Jurieu, Gomarus, Bauer, Altingius, and others.

Dr. Paley's principal argument is, that the first institution of the sabbath took place during the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness. Upon the complaint of the people for want of food, God was pleased to provide for their relief by a miraculous supply of manna, which was found every morning upon the ground about the camp: 'and they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omars for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord:* bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, (as it had done before, when some of them left it till the morning), neither was there any worm

therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; *for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord;* to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh-day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses. How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, *for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath,* therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day[c]."

From this passage Dr. Paley infers that the sabbath was first instituted in the wilderness; but to preclude the possibility of misrepresenting his argument I will quote his own words. "Now, in my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited, was the first actual institution of the sabbath. For if the sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it

[c] Exodus xvi. 21—30.

appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs, which, in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency."

As to the first part of this reasoning, if it were granted that in the history of the patriarchal ages no mention is made of the sabbath, nor even the obscurest allusion to it, it would be unfair to conclude that it was not appointed previous to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. If instituted at the creation, the memory of it might have been forgotten in the lapse of time, and the growing corruption of the world; or,

what is more probable, it might have been observed by the patriarchs, though no mention is made of it in the narrative of their lives, which, however circumstantial in some particulars, is, upon the whole, very brief and compendious. There are omissions in the sacred history much more extraordinary. Excepting Jacob's supplication at Bethel [d], scarcely a single allusion to prayer is to be found in all the Pentateuch; yet, considering the eminent piety of the worthies recorded in it, we cannot doubt the frequency of their devotional exercises. Circumcision being the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, was beyond all question punctually observed by the Israelites, yet, from their settlement in Canaan, no particular instance is recorded of it till the circumcision of Christ, comprehending a period of about 1500 years. No express mention of the sabbath occurs in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second of Samuel, or the first of Kings, though it was doubtless regularly observed all the time included in these histories. In the second book of Kings, and the first and second of Chronicles, it is mentioned only twelve times, and some of them are merely repetitions of the same instance [e]. If the sabbath

[d] Gen. xxviii. 18—22.

[e] Eight times in the singular, 2 Kings iv. 23.—xi. 5, 7, 9.—xvi. 18.—1 Chron. ix. 32.—2 Chron xxiii. 8.—xxxvi. 21. and four times in the plural, 1 Chron. xxiii. 31.—2 Chron. ii. 4.—viii. 13.—xxxi. 3.

is so seldom spoken of in this long historical series, it can be nothing wonderful if it should not be mentioned in the summary account of the patriarchal ages.

But though the sabbath is not expressly mentioned in the history of the anti-diluvian and patriarchal ages, the observance of it seems to be intimated by the division of time into weeks. In relating the catastrophe of the flood, the historian informs us, that Noah, at the end of forty days, opened the window of the ark; "and he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark: and the dove came in to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, pluckt off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more[f]." The term "week" is used by Laban in reference to the nuptials of Leah, when he says, "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years[g]." A week of days is here plainly signified, the same portion of time which in suc-

[f] Gen. viii. 10—12. See the observations of Dr. Kennicott on this part of Noah's history, in his *Diss. on the Oblations of Cain and Abel*, p. 172—176. though perhaps they are more ingenious than solid.

[g] Gen. xxix. 27.

ceeding ages was set apart for nuptial festivities, as appears from the book of Esther, where the marriage feast of Vashti lasted seven days, and more particularly from the account of Samson's marriage-feast [h]. Joseph and his brethren mourned for their father Jacob seven days [i]. In the book of Job, which is generally allowed to be of higher antiquity than any other of the sacred writings, we read that "that there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord," which Dr. Kennicott proposes to render, "And it was the day, and the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord," by which he understands the sabbath, a day enjoined for performing sacred services; but the propriety of this version is very dubious, as the expression may only denote, that "it came to pass on a certain day [k]." It is also contended by Dr. Kennicott, that in the recital of the offerings of Cain and Abel, which in the English translation is, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an

[h] Judges xiv. 10—15. It is not certain that Vashti's was a marriage-feast, Esther i. 9—10. Compare Tobit xi. 19. but in chap. viii. 19. it is spoken of as lasting fourteen days.

[i] Gen. l. 10.

[k] Kennicott, *Dissertation* ii. p. 172. The Hebrew of Job i. 6. is ויהי היום ויבאו בני האלהים on which phrase see Storr, *Obs. ad Anal. et Syntax. Hcb.* p. 125.

offering unto the Lord," the original should be rendered, "And it was at the end of days, and Cain brought," &c. that is, he brought an oblation at or after the conclusion of the week [l]. This interpretation is very ingeniously supported, and the evidence seems to preponderate in its favour; but as the Hebrew may undoubtedly be understood in a different sense, it would be inconsistent with the laws of sound criticism to lay much stress upon it. That the computation of time by weeks, obtained from the most remote antiquity, appears from the traditionary and written records of all nations, the numerous and undeniable testimonies of which have been so often collected and displayed, that it would be worse than useless to repeat them [m].

[l] Kennicott, *Dissertation* ii. p. 177. See Reimari *Cogitationes de Leg. Mos. ante Mosen*, in vol. vi. of *Commentationes Theol.* a Velthusen, &c.

[m] It will be sufficient to refer to Clemens Alexand. *Strom.* v. p. 600.; Theophilus Antioch. *ad Autolyc.* lib. ii.; Eusebius, *Præp. Evangel.* lib. xiii. cap. xii.; Bp. Law, *Theory of Religion*, p. 52.; Jackson, *Chronol. Antiq.*; Townsend, *Character of Moses*, vol. i. p. 61.; Faber, *Horæ Mosaicæ*, vol. i. sect. 1. cap. ii.; Owen, *Exercit. on the Sabbath*, ii. § 13. et seq.; Buddeus, *Inst. Theol. Moralis*, P. ii. cap. ii. sect. 2. § 32; Grotius, *De Veritate* lib. i. cap. xvi.; Huetius, *Dem. Evangel.* Prop. iv. cap. xi. § 1.; Goguet, *Origin of Laws*, lib. iii. cap. ii. art. 2.; *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, vol. iv. p. 45, et seq.; *Jurieu Histoire des Dogmes et des Cultes.* P. i. cap. xvi.; Rivetus, *Exerc.* 13. *in Gen.* and *Append. de Decal.* cap. v.

Combining all these testimonies together, they fully establish the primitive custom of measuring time by the division of weeks, and prevailing as it did among nations separated by distance, having no mutual intercourse, and wholly distinct in manners, it must have originated from one common source, which cannot reasonably be supposed any other than the memory of the creation preserved in the Noahic family, and handed down to their posterities. The computation by days, months, and years, arises from obvious causes, the revolution of the moon, and the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun; but the division of time by periods of seven days, has no foundation in any natural or visible septenary change; it must therefore have originated from some positive appointment, or some tradition anterior to the dispersion of mankind, which cannot well be any other than the memory of the creation and primeval blessing of the seventh day. The custom, it is true, has been supposed to have taken its rise from the planetary bodies, the number and names of which were applied to so many days[n]. But there is great reason to believe, that both the knowledge of the seven planets, and the denomination of the

[n] Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iii. cap. xix. et seq.; Gomarus, *Lib. de Sabbato*, cap. iv.; *Le Clerc in Grotius de Veritate*, lib. i. cap. xvi.; Marsham, *Canon Chron.* secul. ix. p. 194. et seq. 4to. Francq. 1696.

seven days from them, were long posterior to the hebdomadal division of time. Seven principal stars are not once named in the Old Testament, while Joseph makes mention of eleven [o]. The Bible translation of Amos indeed speaks of the seven stars, but the Hebrew expression, though of very doubtful meaning, is certainly not expressive of number [p]. When it is considered also, that however early the study of astronomy began, particularly among the Egyptians, it must have been long before the seven planets were discovered, the hebdomadal division of time cannot have been derived from an observation of the heavenly bodies [q].

The primitive fathers of the church, it is acknowledged, frequently assert that none of the patriarchs before Moses observed the ordinances of the sabbath [r]; but all the declarations of this

[o] Gen. xxxvii. 9.

[p] Amos v. 8.

[q] See Kennicott, *Dissertation* ii. p. 162. et seq.; and Jephson, *Discourse on the Lord's Day*, p. 21. et seq.

[r] Justin Martyr. *Dial. cum Trypho*, p. 236. et seq.; Irenæus, *Hæres*, lib. iv. cap. xxx.; Tertullian, *Adversus Judæos*, § 4.; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. iv. *Preparatio Evangel.* lib. vii. cap. vi. *Dem. Evangel.* lib. i. cap. vi.; Damascen, *De Fide Orthodox*, lib. iv. cap. xxiv. I do not think it necessary to notice Dr. T. Burnet's attempt to prove that these Fathers do not refer to the Jewish sabbath. (*Lett. 2da. ad Archælogiæ*, p. 499.) It is glaringly unsuccessful. See cap. v. of this work.

kind refer to the sabbath, so far as it was peculiarly Jewish. To this, however, it has been objected that, as it would be absurd to refer to an institution before it was appointed, they cannot be rationally thought to have alluded to the Jewish sabbath. But this objection will be easily removed, if we consider that the fathers make these assertions in opposition to the pretensions of the Jews, who maintained the paramount authority of the law of Moses; and their argument is, that we cannot be made heirs of salvation by observing the Levitical law, for the patriarchs were justified without it. In proof of this position, they likewise instance circumcision, shewing that the worthies who lived long before the appointment of this rite were acceptable to God. Their constantly joining the sabbath with circumcision in such arguments, is a full proof that they are speaking of the Jewish sabbath, and not of that which was instituted at the origin of the world. The high authority of the ancient Fathers cannot therefore be pleaded in favour of the opinion, that this latter was not kept by men of piety in the patriarchal ages.

Dr. Paley's next argument is, that "there is not in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus any intimation that the sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended." The contrary, however, seems the more natural infe-

rence from the narrative. It is mentioned exactly in the way an historian would who had occasion to speak of a well-known institution. For instance, when the people were astonished at the double supply of manna on the sixth day, Moses observes, "This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord," which, as far as we know, was never said previously to this transaction, but at the close of the creation. This surely is the language of a man referring to a matter with which the people were already acquainted, and recalling it to their remembrance. In the 5th verse, God promises on the sixth day twice as much as they gather daily. For this no reason is given which seems to imply that it was already known to the children of Israel. Such a promise without some cause being assigned for so extraordinary a circumstance would have been strange indeed; and if the reason had been that the seventh day was now for the first time to be appointed a festival, in which no work was to be done, would not the author have stated this circumstance? Again, it is said, "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none:" and, "for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." Here the sabbath is spoken of as an ordinance with which the people

were familiar. A double quantity of manna was given on the sixth day, *because* the following day, as they well knew, was the sabbath, in which God rested from his work, and which was to be kept as a day of rest, and holy to the Lord. It is likewise mentioned incidentally, as it were, in the recital of the miraculous supply of manna, without any notice of its being enjoined upon that occasion for the first time, which would be a very surprising circumstance had it been the original establishment of the sabbath. In short, the entire phraseology in the account of this remarkable transaction accords with the supposition, and with it alone, that the sabbath had been long established, and was well known to the Israelites.

The learned Mede has a very ingenious argument to prove that the Jews did not keep the *seventh* day holy till the raining of manna. It appears, says he, from the 16th of Exodus, that they marched a wearisome march on the 15th day of the second month; the next morning it rained manna, which was the 16th day, and so six days together; on the seventh, which was the 22d day, it rained none, and that day they were commanded to keep for their sabbath. Now, if the 22d day of the month were the sabbath, the 15th should have been one; but it was not, since they marched on that day a great distance; consequently the seventh day could not have been previously ob-

served as a sabbath[1]. This *may* have been the case, but the argument is not sufficient to prove it, and the fallacy lies in taking it for granted, that it rained manna the next morning after they came to this station in the wilderness of Sin. They arrived there on the 15th day, but the history does not state that they murmured on the same day, or that manna was given on the 16th. It is only said that the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron while they were in the wilderness of Sin, without specifying the time; and there is nothing which fixes the sabbath on the 22d day of the same month; so that it is quite gratuitous to suppose the 15th the day on which they performed a wearisome march, should have been a sabbath; and hence the conclusion, that the Israelites did not keep the seventh day holy before the miraculous supply of manna, is unsound. But even allowing that they did not keep it during their journeying till this period, the proper inference would be, not that the sabbath was *then* appointed, but either that the day was *then* changed, or that the Jews *then* began again to keep it, the observance of it having been neglected during their bondage in Egypt.

Some of the Rabbins contend for a prior origi-

[1] Mede, *Discourse* xv. in *Works*, p. 56. Archbishop Bramhall uses the same argument, *Works*, p. 912.

nal of the sabbath in the station of Marah. Shortly after passing the Red Sea, the children of Israel went out into the wilderness of Shur, "and when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter[t]." After relating how the waters were miraculously made sweet, the sacred historian adds, that the Lord "there made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them[u]." Of these, say the Talmudical writers, the ordinance of the sabbath was one; and the learned Selden has adduced abundance of authorities for this opinion[v]; but commonly as it was received by the Jewish doctors, it is so clearly destitute of even a plausible foundation in Scripture, that a bare statement is a sufficient refutation.

That no neglect of the sabbath is "imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah," is very true; but, so far from their being any proof of such negligence; there is, on the contrary, as we have seen, much reason for believing that it was duly observed by the pious Sethites of the old world, and, after the deluge, by the virtuous line of Shem. True, likewise, it is, that there is not

[t] Exod. xv. 23.

[u] Verse 25.

[v] *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iii. cap. ix. It is refuted by Owen, *Exercit. on the Sabbath*, ii. § 3, 4.

" any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency." But where is the evidence that such a permission would be consistent with the divine wisdom? And if not, none such would either be given or recorded. At any rate, it is difficult to see how the silence of Scripture concerning such a circumstance can furnish an argument in vindication of the opinion, that the sabbath was first appointed in the wilderness. To allege it for this purpose, is just as inconclusive as it would be to argue, that the sabbath was instituted subsequent to the return of the Jews from Babylonia, because neither the observance of it, nor any permission to dispense with it during the captivity is recorded in Scripture.

The passage in the second chapter of Genesis is next adduced by Dr. Paley, and he pronounces it not inconsistent with his opinion; " for as the seventh day was erected into a sabbath, on account of God's resting upon that day from the work of creation, it was natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add, ' and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God created and made;' although the blessing and sanctification, *i. e.* the re-

ligious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterwards. The words do not assert, that God *then* ' blessed' and ' sanctified' the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason;* and if any ask, why the sabbath, or sanctification of the seventh day, was *then* mentioned, if it were not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand: the order of connexion, and not of time, introduced the mention of the sabbath, in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate."

That the Hebrew historian, in the passage here referred to, uses a prolepsis or anticipation, and alludes to the Mosaical institution of the sabbath, is maintained by some of the ancient Fathers, by Waehner, Heidegger, Beausobre, by Le Clerc, Rosenmüller, Geddes, Dawson, and other commentators, and by the general stream of those writers who regard the sabbath as peculiar to the Jews. Yet this opinion is built upon the assumption, that the book of Genesis was not written till after the giving of the law, which *may* be the fact, but of which most unquestionably there is no proof. But waving this consideration, it is scarcely possible to conceive a greater violence to the sacred text, than is offered by this interpretation. It attributes to the inspired author the absurd assertion, that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made, and

THEREFORE about 2500 years after God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. It may as well be imagined that God had finished his work on the seventh day, but rested on some other seventh day, as that he rested the day following the work of creation, and afterwards blessed and sanctified another. Not the slightest evidence appears for believing that Moses followed "the order of connexion, and not of time," for no reasonable motive can be assigned for *then* introducing the mention of it, if it was not *then* appointed. The design of the sacred historian clearly is to give a faithful account of the origin of the world, and both the *resting* on the seventh day and the *blessing* it, have too close a connexion to be separated; if the one took place immediately after the work of creation was concluded, so did the other. To the account of the production of the universe, the whole narrative is confined; there is no intimation of subsequent events, nor the most distant allusion to Jewish ceremonies; and it would be most astonishing if the writer deserted his grand object to mention one of the Hebrew ordinances which was not appointed till ages afterwards.

But according to Dr. Geddes, the opinion of a prolepsis derives some confirmation from the original Hebrew, which he renders, "on the sixth day, God completed all the work which he had to do; and on the SEVENTH day, ceased from doing

any of his works. God, therefore, blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because on it he ceased from all his works, which he had ordained to do." This version, he says, is "in the supposition that the writer refers to the Jewish sabbath;" of course it was designedly adapted to an hypothesis; but, notwithstanding this suspicious circumstance, it is not easy to determine how it differs in sense from the received translation, as it leaves the question entirely undecided *when* this blessing and sanctification took place. The proposed version, however, is opposed by those in the Polyglott, and by the generality of translators, who render the particle *vau* at the beginning of the third verse as a copulative, not as an illative; and it is surprising how a sound Hebrew scholar can translate it otherwise. In short, nothing can be more violent and unnatural than the proleptical interpretation; and if we add, that it rests upon the unproved assumption, that the record in question was written *after* the delivery of the law, it must appear so devoid of critical support, as not to require a moment's hesitation in rejecting it [w].

[w] Dr. Geddes, in his *Critical Note* in loc., says, "I still think that the *vau* here is equivalent to עַל־כֵּן; and is rather an inference drawn by the narrator, than a part of the narrative." But though ו may occasionally be rendered as עַל־כֵּן, a point clearly

Dr. Paley proceeds, " This interpretation[x] is strongly supported by a passage in the prophet Ezekiel, where the sabbath is plainly spoken of as *given*, (and what else can that mean, but as *first instituted?*) in the wilderness.—' Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness: and I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover, also, I *gave them my sabbaths*, to be a

established by Noldius, there is not the slightest ground for doing so in this place. Even those who adopt the same opinion of the sabbath as Dr. Geddes, take it in its usual copulative sense; as Dawson, whose version is, " And God hath blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all his works which God had perfectly completed." For this criticism, however, the Dr. seems to be indebted to Dathe, who, arguing for the primeval institution of the sabbath, says, " Si Moses legem suam commendare Israelitis voluisset, profecto sua verba non conjunxisset per copulam *vau*, ut reliqua totius narrationis connectuntur; sed distinxisset ea per particulam על כן *propterea*, uti cap. ii. 24. atque Exod. xx. 11. hac ipsâ de re agens." (*Nota* to Latin Transl. in loc.) The examples here referred to form a strong argument.

It may be proper to observe, that, in the opinion of some critics, the insertion of the article ה three times in the word השביעי shews it to be that very day on which God rested, and no other, that was sanctified. (Turretin, *Inst. Theol. Elencticæ* P. ii. Loc. xi. Quest. 13. § 7.) But I do not see much force in the observation.

[x] Viz. of Gen. ii. 1—3, before cited.

sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them[y].'" He also cites another passage from Nehemiah[z], in which it is said, that God *made known* his holy sabbaths to the people of Israel; in evident reference, however, to the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, and consequently irrelevant to the present question. Now the Almighty, it is not denied, is represented both here and in a passage formerly cited[a], as giving the sabbath to the Jews, and no one ever doubted that it was peculiarly given to them, so far as it was peculiarly Jewish. According to the Mosaic law, it was to be celebrated with some particular rites and ceremonies, as well as by a more strict rest, all which were peculiar to the Jews, and so far it may be said to have been ordained subsequent to the Egyptian exody. It was also in a special manner given to the Jews, inasmuch as they alone of all nations were enjoined to the observance of the sabbath by an express revelation. Hence nothing more is meant when the sabbath is said to be *given* to the Israelites, than that its observance was enjoined to them in a particular manner in the law of Moses.

An equally short answer will serve for Dr.

[y] Ezek. xx. 10—12.

[z] Chap. ix. 12—15.

[a] Exod. xvi. 29.

Paley's next argument, taken from those passages in which the sabbath is said to be a *sign* between Jehovah and the people of Israel. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant; *it is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever*[b]." Again, "And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; moreover, also I gave them my sabbaths, *to be a sign between me and them*, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them[c]." Now it does not seem easy to understand how the sabbath could be a *sign* between God and the people of Israel, unless the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and "designed to be so." But the answer is easy. By the term "sign," is meant that which should distinguish the people of God from the surrounding heathen nations; and the sabbath bore this distinctive character among the Hebrews, because, while every other people had forgotten or neglected this divine ordinance, they alone religiously maintained its sanctity. It was also peculiar to the Israelites, so far as regards the peculiar mode of observing it commanded in the law. "They were not so much distinguished, says Theodoret,

[b] Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.

[c] Ezek. xx. 12.

from other nations by circumcision, as by the sabbath, for, while the former rite was practised by the Idumeans, Ismaelites, and Egyptians, the Jews alone observed the sabbath [d]." Thus it was a sign, or distinguishing badge of the Hebrew family; and that which is given in common to all may be specifically given to some, as the bow in the cloud, though exhibited to all mankind, was specifically the token of the covenant which Jehovah established with Noah [e].

"The distinction of the sabbath," Dr. Paley proceeds to observe, "is, in its nature, as much a positive ceremonial institution, as that of many other seasons which were appointed by the Levitical law to be kept holy, and to be observed by a strict rest; as the first and seventh days of unleavened bread; the feast of Pentecost; the feast of tabernacles; and in the 23d chapter of Exodus, the sabbath and these are recited together." How this bears upon the present ques-

[d] Theodoret, *Comment. in Ezek.* xx. 13. See also Burnet, *Epist. 2da. in Archæologiæ*, p. 509, where he refers to a variety of pagan poets, historians, and philosophers, who assert the same.

[e] Gen. ix. 8—17. See Turretin, *Inst. Theol. Elenct.* P. ii. Loc. xi. Quest. 13. § 16. Some, and particularly Spencer, who insists that the sabbath was "signi loco," cite in proof Deut. v. 15.—Exod. xx. 8—10. (*De Leg. Heb.* lib. i. cap. iv. § 7, 8.) but they are so little in point, that it is no wonder they were rejected by the sober judgment of Paley.

tion, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. Allowing it to be "a positive ceremonial institution," yet, if it be expressly commanded by the Almighty, it must be binding upon all to whom it is communicated; and the question is, whether such a command has been given to all mankind, to the solution of which the observations in the paragraph just quoted do not contribute either way.

Dr. Paley further urges, "If the command by which the sabbath was instituted be binding upon Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties, and the penalty; in none of which it is received." Now, if this refers to the Jewish sabbath, the answer must be unequivocally in the negative; for the PECULIAR OBSERVANCE of it enjoined in the law, is abrogated together with the polity of which it formed a part; but if A SABBATICAL ORDINANCE was enjoined upon the whole human species at the creation, it must be binding upon all as to the day, the duties, and the penalty, unless the original institution be altered or repealed. Whether it be so received or not makes no difference in the case; the obligation of a divine command remains the same whether it be obeyed or disobeyed.

Such are the arguments which this acute reasoner has produced to support his opinion, that the sabbath was not originally instituted at the creation, but ought to be considered as part of the peculiar

law of the Jewish polity [f]; and after a careful examination, they have been found to be unsatisfactory and inconclusive. This part of the subject might, therefore, without much impropriety be concluded, since it is not likely that the cause can be established, in which Dr. Paley has failed; but, as other arguments have been produced in its defence, it may be right to review them.

The command respecting the sabbath in the second chapter of Genesis, it has been contended, cannot be designed to be universally binding, since universal obedience is impossible. Some parts of the earth are destitute for months together of the presence of the sun, involved in perpetual gloom, and in these dreary regions of cold and desolation, computation of time by days and nights, weeks and months, is impracticable. The day likewise is constantly varying with the annual and diurnal movements of our globe, so that mid-day in one country is mid-night in another: from all which it is inferred, that the precise period of time which the Almighty blessed and sanctified, because he then rested from his works, cannot be universally observed, and therefore cannot be universally enjoined [g].

[f] Dr. Paley adds to the arguments reviewed, one from Col. ii. 16, 17.; but this, together with his reasonings against the universal obligation of the sabbath will be examined hereafter.

[g] Spencer, *De Leg. Hebræor.* lib. i. cap. iv. sect. 9.; Heylin,

This objection, it must be allowed, wears at the first glance an imposing appearance, which nevertheless will entirely vanish upon a closer inspection. Let the same mode of argument be applied to the ordinances of the gospel. Many infants die before they can be baptized, and it may be that converts of mature age to the Christian faith may from unavoidable circumstances be prevented from participating in that holy rite. Believers in Christ may also be situated where, from a variety of causes, the sacrament of the Lord's supper cannot be administered. Such cases are clearly possible, but can they be allowed as an argument against the divine institution of these ordinances? Certainly not. All that can fairly be inferred is, that cases do sometimes, though

History of the Sabbath, P. i. cap. iii. § 2, 3. This last author says, "Suppose we that a Turk, a Jew, and a Christian, should dwell together at Jerusalem, whereof the one doth keep his sabbath on the Friday; the other on the Saturday; and the third sanctifieth the Sunday: then, that upon the Saturday, the Turk begin his journey westward, and the Christian eastward; so as both of them compassing the world, do meet again at the same place, the Jew continuing where they left him. It will fall out, that the Turk, by going westward, having lost a day, and the Christian, going eastward, having got a day; one and the selfsame day will be a Friday to the Turk; a Saturday unto the Jew; and a Sunday to the Christian, in case they calculate the time exactly from their departure to their return." See Wagenseil, *Tela Signea Satanæ*, *Confut. Lipmanni*, p. 571. et seq.

rarely, occur, when these rites must be dispensed with. There is scarcely a rule of law, or precept of morality, which can be acted upon without some exceptions, yet it would be absurd to infer that the rule and precept are therefore not binding upon the whole human race. As the non-observance of a rite, when compliance is impossible, is justified by the necessity, the obligation of the sabbath must cease where the observance of it is impracticable; but such extreme cases cannot in reason be pleaded against its divine origin, or universal obligation.

In the code of revelation, moral duties are required, the laws are promulgated in general terms, without specifying those exceptions to which every general rule is liable. As for instance, the duty of obedience to civil governors is laid down in comprehensive terms, without any limitations, or any reference to those occasions, when, through the wickedness or tyranny of rulers, resistance becomes imperative. In the same way the gospel precepts are delivered without stating such restrictions, as, in some cases, are imposed by the nature of things, and the circumstances attending them. Had the Deity, therefore, willed to bind all mankind to the duty of keeping the seventh day holy, he would declare it generally, as it is natural to suppose, and

without mentioning any of those exceptions which must eventually occur. And such is actually the fact; the law is promulged in general terms, in the same manner as the other laws of God, without a hint at any reservation, and without specifying the few cases when obedience, being impossible, cannot be required by eternal justice.

The allegation that the period which the Almighty blessed and sanctified agreeably to the account in Genesis, cannot be observed by reason of the annual and diurnal revolution of the earth, contains more of cavil than of serious objection. It resembles those fierce, but unprofitable disputes which disturbed the peace of the ancient church respecting the time for the celebration of Easter. No part of the law of God, we may be assured, was intended to depend upon curious astronomical calculations; and that obedience only is demanded which is yielded in spirit and in truth. The real meaning of the injunction is, that the seventh day, because in it the Almighty rested from his grand display of creative power, was to be set apart by his creatures, and dedicated to religious offices. If the seventh day, or, what is much the same thing, an equivalent space of time which may be measured by hours, be devoted to such purposes, the spirit and intention of the command is complied with, though nations

may differ as to the particular time [h]. The sabbath, then, may be observed in all lands, not even excepting those which extend, in melancholy solitude, beneath the polar skies. Though the sun at one part of the year may be for months below the horizon, and at another part for months above it, a portion of time equivalent to a day in the temperate zones, may be sanctified even there with the exercises of religion. But if it were impossible, it would form only a trifling exception to the general applicability of the rule. Few are the inhabitants who obtain a scanty provision in these ungenial climates; a waste and barren soil bound by the rigours of an arctic winter, denies subsistence for a numerous population; and, if the observation of the sabbath be impracticable, the mercy of heaven will doubtless pardon the involuntary neglect among the hordes which must ever be thinly scattered over those bleak and frozen regions.

The alleged impossibility of the universal observance of the sabbath, therefore, forms no valid objection; but it is further urged, that the Hebrew doctors, whose authority is in this, if any subject, entitled to respect, believe it to be an ordinance peculiar to the Jews; a point which Sel-

[h] This subject is discussed at length in chapter iv. sect. 2. of this work.

den has laboured to establish with his usual profundity of erudition [i]. This learned writer, it is true, has accumulated a variety of testimonies in support of this statement; but the Rabbins, buoyed up with the notion that their nation was the favourite of heaven, and proud of the many privileges granted to it, very naturally supposed the sabbath to be, like the rest of the Levitical law, limited to the chosen race; for which reason their sentiments on this subject may well be suspected of being tinctured with prejudice and partiality. Yet some of them, as Aben Ezra, Maimonides, Abarbinel, Manasseh ben Israel, allow that the sabbath was instituted at the beginning of the world [k]; and what may be deemed of still higher importance, Philo and Josephus speak of the sabbath as an universal institution. The former calls it "a feast, not of one city or country, but of the whole world [l];" he pronounces it "the world's birth-day," (του κοσμου γενεσιον. *ibid.*) and "the festival of all people." (πανδημον *scil* εορτην, *ibid.*) He also remarks, "who is there that does

[i] Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iii. cap. x. et seq. See Spencer, *De Leg. Hebræor.* lib. i. cap. iv.

[k] Proof of this may be found in Selden, *ibid.*; and Dr. Owen, *Exercit. on the Sab.* Exerc. ii. § 5.; and Meyer, *De Festis Hebræor.* P. ii. cap. ix. § 24. et seq.

[l] Εορτη ου μιας πολεως, ἡ χωρας εστιν, ἀλλα του παντος *De Mundi Opificio* p. 15. E. Ed. Colon. 1613.

not reverence that sacred seventh day which brings rest and relaxation to him and his domestics, to the bond as well as to the free, and moreover to the brute beasts themselves [m]?" Josephus, in relating the works of the six days' creation, mentions the sabbath as if it were then instituted; and he elsewhere speaks of it as an universal ordinance, the observation of which had spread to every nation, Greek and Barbarian [n]. It is not to be denied, however, that both these learned Jews sometimes speak of it as an ordinance peculiarly Jewish, so that it is difficult to ascertain to which side their sentiments really incline [o]. But whatever may be thought of their testimony, the

[m] Τις γαρ την ἱεραν ἐκεινην ἑβδομην οὐκ ἐκτετιμηκεν, ἀνεσιν ποιων και ῥαστωνην αὐτω τε και τοις πλησιασουσιν, οὐκ ἐλευθεροις μονον, ἀλλα και δουλοις, μαλλον δε και ὑποζυγιοις ὑιδους. *De Vita Mosis*, lib. ii. p. 508. E. Compare also *De Decalogo*, p. 585. B. C.; *De Lege Allegor.* p. 33. B. C. D.; *De Vita Mosis*, lib. iii. p. 529. B. et seq.

[n] *Antiq.* lib. i. cap. i. § 1.; *Contra Apion.* lib. ii. §. 40.

[o] See Philo, *De Decalogo*, p. 585. B.; *De Vita Mosis.* lib. iii. p. 529. C. and p. 530. A. B.; *De Abrahamo*, p. 277. c.; *De Migrat. Abrahami*, p. 315. A.; *De Profugis*, p. 371. C.; Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xvi. cap. ii. § 4. lib. xii. cap. 6. § 2.; *Jewish War*, lib. ii. cap. xvi. § 4. lib. iv. cap. ii. § 3.; *Life*, § 32.; *Against Apion*, lib. i. § 22. More passages might be cited, but a comparison of those here referred to, will be sufficient to shew, that there is an ambiguity, if not an inconsistency, in their declarations concerning the sabbath. See the acute observations of the Abbe Sallier in *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, vol. iv. p. 50. et seq.

Hebrew doctors are far from being unanimous in maintaining the original institution of the sabbath in the wilderness, which opinion, therefore, cannot justly claim the authority of the Hebrew church, nor if it could, would that authority be allowed by Christians to be decisive.

Again, it has been argued in opposition to the primeval sanctity of the sabbath, that God gave but one command to Adam in paradise, namely, not to eat the forbidden fruit; whereas, if he were obliged to keep the seventh day holy, he must have had two commands laid upon him, which is contrary to the fact[p]. Now the sacred history, it is acknowledged, states that there was only one command given to Adam, the breach of which was to be visited with the penalty of death; but other obligations must have been imposed upon the Protoplast besides that of abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was strictly obligated to offer the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving to God, and to perform the other duties which are demanded from the creature to the Creator. Adam, therefore, must have had other obligations laid upon him, though there was only one positive command given as the test of his obedience. Besides, the objection supposes that the injunction to sanctify the seventh day

[p] Jurieu, *Histoire des Dogmes*, P. i. cap. xv. p. 108.

was not pronounced at the creation, which is a mere begging of the question; for if it were *then* given, there must have been more than one command expressly laid upon Adam in paradise; and, since this may as well be supposed as the contrary, the argument must of course rest upon precarious ground.

The same author further urges, that a certain day destined to repose, to contemplation, and to prayer, is unsuitable to a state of innocence; inasmuch as Adam, in the garden of Eden, before the earth was subjected to a curse, could have had no toil requiring alternate rest; and it could not be necessary to separate a particular day for meditation, since his whole life would have been employed in the service of God: whence it is concluded, that the sabbath was not instituted in paradise [1]. Now this conclusion is readily allowed to be legitimately deduced from the premises, but where is the evidence to shew that the consecration of the seventh day was not, in some way

[1] Jurieu, *ibid.* He thus concludes, "Il est donc clair, que ce commandement n' est bon qu' à l'homme corrumpu et miserable, qui est obligé d'employer la plus grande partie de sa vie au soin du corps, et qui ne sauroit, à cause de la petitesse de son cœur, parmi ses autres occupations, s'attacher à la contemplation avec toute l'assiduité necessaire." But this is quite gratuitous. Compare Altingius, *De Tempore Instituti Sabbathi*, lib. i. cap. iv. and v.

or other, as necessary to man in his pristine, as his fallen state? An occasional repose *might* be advantageous, and there *might* be a peculiar fitness in a septenary day of peculiar holiness. The contrary is, what neither Monsieur Jurieu, nor any other man can prove; and of course the argument, involving as it does questions beyond human ability to solve, rests upon a sandy foundation.

It has been questioned whether the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day was intended to be confined to that single day, or to be extended to every successive revolution of seven days. But though the record in Genesis does not state that God sanctified every seventh day, the same is clearly implied; for what other meaning can the expressions have "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it?" And this natural signification of the phrase is fully confirmed by the design and object of the institution. The reason of the benediction was, because God *then* rested from his labours; it was therefore designed to commemorate the great work of creation, which it could not do, in respect to succeeding generations of men, except by the observance of an hebdomadal rest. Nor could the object of it be accomplished in any other way; for as the divine appropriation of one day was intended for the benefit of man, that benefit would not accrue if the blessing and

sanctification were confined to the single day which followed the work of creation. "It will also be allowed a conclusive maxim," as Dr. Kennicott observes, "that every wise institution must be designed to last as long as the usefulness of that institution continues; consequently, if the usefulness of a sabbath continued, the sabbath must have been designed to continue also, and to be in force after its first observation [r]."

It would be unpardonable to omit an objection stated and discussed by that eminent scholar and divine Bishop Horsley [s]. It is to this effect, that if the antiquity and universality of the original institution of the sabbath be made the ground of a permanent obligation to the observance of it, mankind would, upon the same principle, be held to various ceremonies which for many ages have sunk into disuse. The prohibition to eat blood for instance, bore the same antiquity with respect to the second race of men, as the sabbath with respect to the first. The prohibition of blood followed the deluge as closely as the sabbath followed the creation. The one was no less general to all the sons of Noah than the other to all the sons of Adam. It should seem, therefore, that the prohibition of blood is equally obligatory with the

[r] *Two Dissertations*, p. 128. But see Vriemoet, *Dicta Classica*, vol. iii. p. 161.

[s] Sermons, vol. ii. Serm. xxii.

sabbath, since the argument from antiquity and original generality applies with equal force to both. Upon what principle, then, is the sanctity of the sabbath maintained by those who openly disregard the prohibition against eating blood?—Such is the objection which, formidable as it appeared to the learned prelate, may be very briefly answered. The eating of blood was forbidden at the time when the Lord of the earth granted the permission of animal food[t]; the restraint therefore was generally binding upon mankind, and would have continued so, unless solemnly repealed by the same power that enacted it. Though some, from conscientious scruples, abstain from meats prepared with the blood of animals, the prohibition has been repealed, as it should seem, by apostolical authority[u]: but be this as it may, it in no way invalidates the perpetuity of the sabbath, the original obligation of which has never been abrogated.

It has been attempted to invalidate the argument from the first institution of the sabbath, by alleging that the narrative of the creation is an old, though ingenious philosophical mythos, inserted by the author of the Pentateuch, to account for the origin of the world. The hypothesis that

[t] Gen. ix. 3, 4.

[u] Rom. xiv. 14—17. 1 Cor. vi. 12.—viii. 8.—x. 25. 1 Tim. iv. 4.

the book of Genesis was compiled from documents of a date long anterior to Moses, has found numerous advocates, but having in part examined it in another work, I may be spared the labour of discussing it here. In the publication alluded to, the literal sense of the Mosaic history of the fall is vindicated at length, and many of the observations there made may be applied in support of the grammatical exposition of the history of the creation. If the second and third chapters are a literal recital of events, it will scarcely be denied that the first is so. The allegorical interpretation is, in truth, so absurd, so inconsistent with scriptural phraseology, so irreconcileable with the uniform declarations of the inspired writers, so opposed to the very design of historical composition, that a laboured refutation is scarcely required. But if the recital of the creation could be proved to be a mythological fragment, it would not undermine the argument for the obligation of the sabbath, derived from the beginning of Genesis, as it certainly makes mention of that ordinance, which renders it probable that it was, at least in part, designed to enforce it; and this is actually the conjecture of some critics [x].

[x] "Simulque eo consilio scripsisse videtur, ut sanctitatem Sabbati declararet. Eo totius orationis συναφεια tendit. Hinc Deus sex diebus operatur, septimum autem diem, quo a labore quievit, sacrum esse jubet." Bauer, *Dicta Classica Vet. Test.* P. i.

But there is another objection too formidable in its aspect, and resting upon an hypothesis too ably supported, to be passed over without examination. The six demiurgic days, it is said, in the course of which God is represented to have formed the world out of nothing, are not six natural days, those brief periods which are measured by the revolution of our planet round its axis, but six vast periods of very considerable length. The seventh, therefore, which was blessed and sanctified, was not one single day, but a period of vast, though indefinite length, the termination of which has not yet arrived. If this theory be established, a single natural day most undoubtedly cannot be the measure of the divine sabbath, and consequently the command in the second chapter of Genesis has no connexion whatever with the hebdomadal sabbath observed in the Jewish and Christian churches. The seventh day, it is true, may have been set apart in commemoration of the repose which followed the six demiurgic periods, but this must have been either by human

sect. ii, p. 109. So Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Gen.* cap. i ; and Geddes, *Preface*, p. 6. ; and *Critical Remarks* on Gen. ii. 3. The account of the sabbath in the second chapter of Genesis, has been objected to on the score of obscurity. I do not wish to pass over any plausible objection, but this appears to me so trifling as not to deserve a reply. Those, however, who may desire to see it refuted, may consult Owen, *Exercit. on the Sab.* iii. § 37.

authority, or some subsequent revelation; for if the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day recorded in Genesis, does not relate to a natural day, but to a period of considerable length, it cannot be construed into a command to observe a weekly sabbath. Hence it is imperative to demolish this theory, or to own at once that the obligation of the sabbath cannot be derived from its original institution.

The hypothesis upon which this objection is grounded, has had several abettors of no mean distinction in the annals of literature; and it has lately been defended at great length, and with all the lights which a powerful mind could supply, by a learned and ingenious writer of our own times [y]. As it is not likely that any argument of

[y] Mr. Faber, *Treatise on the Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian Dispensations*, lib. i. cap. iii. For information on points connected with the theory above mentioned, see Rosenmüller, *Antiquissima Telluris Historia a Mose Descripta;* Beck, *De Fontibus Sententiarum de Creatione;* Chichester, *Deism compared with Christianity*, Lett. xx.; D'Herbelot, *Bibliotheque Orientale*, voc. Dunia; Doederlein, *Inst. Theol. Christiani*, sect. 127. Obs. ii.; Wegscheider, *Inst. Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmat.* § 97.; Petavius, *Dogmat. Theol.* vol. iii. lib. i. cap. v.; *Moses Vindicatus adversus T. Burnet; Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi. p. 49.; Rosenmüller and Dathe in *Gen.* i.; Burnet, *Lett. ii. in Archæologiæ;* Ammon, *Summa Theologiæ Christianæ*, § 58, 59.; Buddeus, *Inst. Theol. Dogmat.* lib. ii. cap. ii. § 8. and *Hist. Eccles.* Per. i. sect. i. § 2.; Nares, *Bampton Lecture* vi.;

weight in its favour has escaped the sagacity and researches of Mr. Faber, it will be sufficient to examine what he has advanced upon the subject; for, if his forces are routed, we may be assured that no reserve can be brought up competent to retrieve the battle. He thus attempts to sustain his hypothesis. "That the six demiurgic days, instead of being nothing more than six natural solar days, were each a period of very considerable length, may be proved, partly *by analogy of language,* partly by *the very necessity of the narrative,* partly by *ancient tradition,* and partly (and that most decisively) by *the discoveries, or possibly the re-discoveries of modern physiologists* [z]."

The first of these arguments, the analogy of language, may be thus stated. Moses relates that God fashioned the world in six days, and rested on the seventh; it therefore follows, that, if one of the seven mundane days be a natural day, they must all be natural days; and conversely, if one of the seven mundane days be a period of great length, they must all be periods of great length [a]. This will scarcely be denied; but how is it attempted to be proved that any one of these seven

Douglas, *Dissertation on the Antiquity of the Earth;* Sumner, *Records of the Creation,* Append. i. to vol. i.; Parkinson, *Organic Remains of a Former World.*

[z] Vol. i. p. 111.

[a] Vol. i. p. 112.

days was a period of great length? Mr. Faber takes the seventh for this purpose, and observes, that, "if God laboured six natural days and rested on the seventh natural day, the very turn of the statement will unavoidably imply, that he resumed his labours on the eighth natural day, or on the first day of the following natural week[b]." But God, as he argues, did not resume his labours on the eighth natural day, for we are assured, that, "the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them," were finished on the sixth day, and that "on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made;" and therefore, if God did not resume his creative labours on the eighth natural day, his sabbath or rest must be extended beyond the limits of the seventh natural day. But this reasoning rests solely upon the assumption, that the very turn of the statement in Genesis, implies that God resumed his labours on the eighth natural day; an assumption entirely without foundation in the sacred text, which is, "on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." The seventh day is here

[b] Vol. i. p. 114.

pointed out as the day on which the Almighty rested from his work, but whether he continued to rest, or resumed his labours on the eighth day, the history is altogether silent, and the one may as well be asserted as the other.

The second argument is thus stated by Mr. Faber: "We are told, that *God created every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew*[c], whence, as Bishop Warburton justly observes, we are obliged to conclude, that God created the whole vegetable family, not in a state of maturity, but in the condition of seed previous to germination. Now the whole vegetable family was created on the third day; birds of every description were created on the fifth day; and beasts and reptiles and man were created on the sixth day. Such being the case, it is clear, on the supposition of the six demiurgic days being six natural days, that, without a miracle, all graminivorous and seminivorous and fructivorous animals must have perished through hunger: because on such a supposition, the vegetable seeds, which were created and committed to the earth on the third day, could not, in the ordinary course of germination, have produced a sufficiency of food for non-carnivorous animals created on the fifth and sixth

[c] Gen. ii. 5.

days in time to save them from destruction by famine[d]." He, therefore, concludes that the six demiurgic days must be extended to six vast periods, in order to allow time for the production of food for the animal creation.—Now this argument is built upon the supposition that the seeds only of vegetables were originally created, which is so far from being affirmed, that the sacred narrative implies directly the reverse. Moses expressly says that the Lord God formed "every PLANT of the field before it was in the earth, and every HERB of the field before it grew," thus denominating the vegetables then created "plants" and "herbs," which he would scarcely have done had he meant that the "seeds" of vegetables were first formed; because, in the preceding chapter, he distinguishes the *plants* and *herbs* from their *seeds*. Hence it is fair to infer, that these plants and herbs were created in their state of full productive maturity. But even allowing that the whole vegetable family was created in the condition of seed previous to germination, that Being who called them into existence, could easily hasten their growth with sufficient rapidity to afford subsistence to the newly-created animals. Thus the argument is built upon a false sup-

[d] Vol. i. p. 117.

position, and even if it were not, is altogether unsound.

The third argument, derived from the correspondency of ancient traditions, is wholly insufficient to prove that the six demiurgic days were six extended periods, since tradition, whatever weight it may have as corroborative testimony, can have but very little in the silence of holy Scripture.

The last and principal argument is derived from the discoveries, or possibly the re-discoveries of modern physiologists. These, in Mr. Faber's opinion, afford positive and direct and palpable demonstration, that the six creative days must have been six periods of vast, though to us unknown, duration[e]. But confidently as this is propounded, it is obvious to remark that it stands upon very precarious ground. Geological science is but in its infancy, and, being conversant with the interior strata of the earth which has been only partially explored, it may well be doubted whether it yet affords sufficient data for a sound conclusion. In no branch of human knowledge has there been a greater variety of systems and theories; and many philosophers, who must be supposed far superior to

[e] Vol. i. p. 20.

Mr. Faber in physiological knowledge, have arrived at a very different result. Hence but little dependence can be placed upon an argument drawn from a science, the uncertainty of which should teach us to pause and hesitate, rather than to indulge in peremptory decisions. Though religion has nothing to dread from the progress of knowledge, or the discoveries of science, the rashness is to be condemned which opposes the plain sense of the sacred Writings upon doubtful and imperfect information. In all cases where the deductions of natural philosophy are at variance with the declarations of Scripture, it is more reasonable to suspect our philosophy, than to deny the truth of Revelation, or to adopt interpretations which have nothing to recommend them but their accordance with our theories [f].

[f] "From the endless discordance in the opinions of philosophers on this point, from the manifest inadequacy of the data we are at present in possession of, and from the physical impossibilities which must for ever be a bar to any thing more than a superficial knowledge of the earth's structure, it is preposterous to suppose that that high degree of moral evidence, on which the credibility of Scripture rests, can with any justice be weakened by our interpretation of phenomena, the connexion of which among themselves even we certainly are at present, and probably ever shall be, incapable of explaining." Professor Kidd, *Geological Essay*, cap. 1. See also Granville Pen, *Comparative Estimate*, &c.; Watson, *Theological Institutes*, P. 1. cap. 20.; Sumner, *Records of the Creation*, Append. 1.

To pursue the argument in detail would require a familiarity with geological science, to which the writer of these pages lays no claim. Declining an attempt, therefore, which, with his superficial acquaintance with physiology, would necessarily be unsatisfactory, he must content himself with submitting a few general observations.

The mode of reasoning adopted by those who espouse the notion of great mundane revolutions and catastrophes previous to the formation of man, appears strikingly fallacious. From the successive depositions of the strata forming the crust of our globe, and from the various fossil remains embedded even in the hardest of these strata, it is inferred that the age of the earth must be extended far beyond the period of the creation of the first human pair. But is it certain that these phenomena can only be explained upon such a supposition? May they not be attributed to some other cause? May not most of them be accounted for by the fact of the general deluge? If others cannot be so accounted for, may they not be owing to some partial catastrophe anterior to that event? May not several of them have originated at the moment when, at the Almighty word, order arose from the first-created chaos which was without form and void? May they not have been produced in much less

time than supposed, by the operation of those laws and principles by which the material world is regulated? In short, are they inexplicable upon any other hypothesis than that of some revolution or revolutions in the crust of our globe previous to the formation of man? To assert the impossibility of this would manifest a presumption and rashness utterly repugnant to all true philosophy; yet, unless such impossibility exists, the premises will not warrant the conclusion. The strata and fossil minerals of the earth, if they *can* be attributed to any other cause, will not *prove* any mundane revolutions prior to the date of the Mosaic history. The utmost extent of the argument will be, that these phenomena are not inconsistent with, or may be explained by anti-pentateuchal catastrophes, but, except it can be shewn that they can be referred to *no other cause,* they will not demonstrate the actual existence of such catastrophes. The existing phenomena *may* be, and probably are, owing to other causes, and, unless anti-pentateuchal revolutions in the crust of the earth be demonstrated, an extension of time beyond six natural days is not rendered necessary by these existing phenomena.

If even the existence of such mundane revolutions could be proved, it will not follow that the

six demiurgic days were six vast periods of time. Suppose it could be shewn by invincible evidence, that these are geological phenomena *necessarily* carrying us beyond the period assigned in the Scriptures to the creation of man, it will not be necessary to extend the creative labours described in Genesis beyond six natural days. The mass of crude and inert matter of which this world is composed may have been created at an immense distance of time previous to the six periods mentioned in the Mosaic narrative, and the subsequent organization there related may have been effected in the space of six natural days. Of this Mr. Faber is aware, and attempts, though unsuccessfully, to repel its force[s]. It is not inconsistent with the language of Scripture; for Moses may be supposed to describe in the first verse of Genesis the original creation of matter, and in the second to commence an account of those detailed operations by which it was reduced to its present order and form. It surely does less violence to the expressions of the sacred historian than the other hypothesis, while it serves equally to account for the vestiges of ante-mundane revolutions, if any such really exist. This theory has been sanctioned by

[s] Vol. i. p. 156.

writers of eminence [h], and, whatever degree of verisimilitude it may possess, must be allowed to be possible, and perhaps as probable as the other. If, then, the existence of inert matter for a long, but indefinite period prior to the arrangement and organization described by Moses be *possible*, time will be allowed for the completion of those processes which geological appearances may seem to require; and this evinces beyond a doubt that an extension of time in the work of creation, beyond six natural days, is not *necessarily* required by any existing phenomena.

The hypothesis in question, then, is supported by a fallacious mode of reasoning, and is moreover open to several objections. There is no intimation in other parts of the sacred Volume, that the six days of creation were six periods of indefinite duration, which would be truly astonishing had they been really so, and not six natural days. The phraseology also of the inspired historian, "the evening and the morning were the first day," and "the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night," implies that each portion of the work was per-

[h] See Rosenmüller, *Hist. Telluris Antiqua;* Doederlein, *Inst. Theol. Christ.* §. 127.; Bp. Gleig, Note to Stackhouse's History of the Bible, lib. i. cap. i.; Dr. Chalmers, *Evidences of the Christian Revelation.*

formed in the course of one entire day, or within the period of one revolution of our planet round its axis. The word "day" *generally* denotes such a period, perhaps *always*, except in prophecy or poetical composition, and it would be most unaccountable if it were used in any other sense in so plain and simple a narrative as the beginning of Genesis. It has been said, indeed, that it does not bear the same meaning throughout the first chapter, because the first three days were passed before the creation of the sun is mentioned; and yet in these, no less than in the others, the portion of time is denoted by the words "evening and morning," which, according to their received import, necessarily suppose the existence of the sun[1]. But the answer is easy. If the earth received its rotatory motion when it was first called into existence, as seems requisite to the order of the planetary system, one revolution upon its axis would, in point of time, constitute one day; and the inspired historian expresses this in the usual phraseology, though, strictly speaking, "the evening and the morning" suppose the existence of the sun. It is difficult to conceive in what other way he could so well express the time denoted by one revolution of the earth. It is also to be remembered that light was created before,

[1] *Quarterly Review*, Vol xxix. No. 57. p. 163.

so that the effect might be in some degree analogous to that which is now produced by the rising and setting of the sun.

That the seventh was a natural day is apparent from the very act of blessing and sanctification. The expressions "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," denote, as the best commentators observe, that God ordered it to be set apart for the purpose of preserving the memory of the creation, and of offering prayer, praise, and adoration to the great Creator; a purpose which can alone be answered by hallowing every seventh day. It will not abate the force of this observation to assert, with the writer in the *Quarterly* already referred to, and others, that the observance of the sabbath was enjoined as commemorative of the close of the great work of creation, and that its solemn obligation is expressed by the parallel which it pleased God to draw between the progress of his own works, and the destined employment of that being whom he made in his own likeness. The period of one natural day alone can be commemorative of the close of the great work of creation, and, by consequence, the seventh day blessed and sanctified was a natural day, which, according to a remark previously made, infers that the whole of the six demiurgic days were six natural days.

Thus the hypothesis that the Pentateuchal

days of creation are vast periods of time is not only destitute of adequate support, but is opposed by some strong positive reasons. The argument, therefore, which is built upon it against the primitive institution of the sabbath must, of course, fall to the ground.

The principal objections against the universal observation of the sabbath, derived from the account of its institution in the second chapter of Genesis, have now been collected, and, it is hoped, refuted. Some others might have been noticed, but they do not appear of sufficient importance to require a distinct examination ; for those which have been produced, and shewn to be unsubstantial, are the main support of the cause of the objectors. Now the overthrow of these is sufficient for the establishment of the opposite side of the question. The record is couched in general terms ; and if the principal reasons for regarding it as an account, by way of anticipation, of a temporary ordinance of the Jews be invalid, it must necessarily be understood in a more enlarged sense, as the appointment of an institution designed for perpetuity. In order, however, to complete this part of the investigation, some direct arguments shall be subjoined, for believing that the command respecting the sabbath was given by the Almighty immediately after his demiurgic labours, and addressed to all

mankind, which infers its obligation upon all to whom the truths of Revelation are communicated.

In considering the passage of Genesis upon which the sole question depends, it must strike every attentive reader as declaring, in its plain and obvious sense, that the Deity at the close of the creation consecrated the seventh day in memory of that work, and set it apart for religious services. From the connection which it has with the preceding recital of the creation, it seems evident that Moses is speaking of one continuous transaction. The whole is a simple historical narrative in which, as clause follows clause in grammatical combination, it is fair to suppose that events are recorded in the order of succession. The blessing of the seventh day, then, immediately following the account of the six days' work, and being joined by the usual copulative, points it out as simultaneous with the completion of the divine cosmogony. There is no interval in the course of the history, no allusion to posterior transactions, no intimation in the slightest degree tending to refer the original of the sabbath to a subsequent period. Had it been merely mentioned proleptically, some qualifying adjunct would surely have disclosed to the reader that such was the case. But nothing of this kind is discoverable, while, on the contrary, the whole phraseology most obviously implies

that the benediction was pronounced by the Deity upon the conclusion of his creative labours.

The perpetuity of the sabbath may be inferred from the nature and mode of this primæval benediction. Some eminence and distinction are clearly attributed to the seventh day above the other six, for upon it alone was bestowed the express benediction of the Deity. As it cannot be conceived how any particular day can be said to be "blessed" otherwise than by being made the appointed time for the communication of some benefit or happiness to intelligent creatures, when God blessed the seventh day, he must have pronounced it to be the time for conferring his choicest blessings on man. It is an engagement on his part that he will be propitious to those who discharge the duty of keeping the seventh day holy in the true spirit of piety and faith. This is confirmed by the additional expression "and sanctified it;" that is, he separated it from a common to a sacred use, for that is the acknowledged signification of the Hebrew word; and such separation manifestly implies its appropriation to religious purposes. As it can have no reference to an infinite Being, who is for ever and essentially holy, it must be referred to man; who is thus enjoined to observe that portion of time which God has separated for acts of holiness. If the Almighty has sanctified, or appro-

priated one day in the week to sacred purposes, as it cannot be in respect to his own nature, which is equally sanctified every moment of his eternal duration, it must be for the use of man. In this passage, therefore, it is declared that the Supreme Governor has set apart the seventh day for sacred objects, without limitation to age or country, and has annexed the promise of a special blessing to it; of course the command is obligatory upon the whole human race to whom, in the wisdom of Providence, it may be communicated [k].

[k] The interpretation above given is supported by the great body of commentators and lexicographers, so that it would be useless to crowd the margin by reference to authorities. The following, however, appears so well expressed that I cannot forbear to quote it. "Non potest diei Deus benedixisse diei septimo, et illum sanctificasse, nisi per sabbathi institutionem; non alium enim in finem est benedictus ille dies, nisi ut Dei cultui consecraretur in memoriam quietis divinæ ab operationibus creationis; dicitur ergo Deus benedixisse et sanctificasse, quia sanctificando benedixit, a profano et communi usu segregando, et divino cultui dedicando; ut deinceps ab hominibus sanctificaretur per exercitia publica pietatis et solennem Dei cultum." Turretin, *Inst. Theol. Elenct.* P. 2. Loc. 11. Quæst. 13. §. 6. See also Reimari, *Cogitationes*, &c. in *Commentationes Theol.* Vol. vi. p. 47.

This citation leads me to observe that some critics consider the expressions in Genesis ii. 3. "blessed" and "sanctified" as exegetical of each other, i. e. he blessed the seventh day by sanctifying it; as Numb. vii. 1. וימשחם ויקדש אותם, "and he anointed them and sanctified them," viz. he sanctified them by anointing them. There may be some truth in this;

This interpretation receives no small confirmation from the reason specified for the sanctification of the sabbath. God blessed and sanctified it "BECAUSE that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." He, therefore, set it apart in memory of the stupendous work of creation; a design which cannot be fulfilled by it, unless mankind devote it to rest as he rested on that day, and unless they commemorate the completion of that work by dedicating it to the service of the Almighty Architect. The example of the Deity being thus proposed for our

but I see nothing in the phraseology of Gen. ii. 3. requiring such an exposition, and it seems harsh to have recourse to it without any necessity. The passage admits an excellent sense without it, and the two words are joined by the copulative, as intended to convey a different idea, and not to be explanatory of each other. At any rate, if this criticism be admitted, it will not impair the evidence for the sabbath derived from Gen. ii. 3.

This evidence would be still stronger if Dr. Kennicott's proposed interpretation could be admitted, which takes ויברך in the conjugation Hiphil, and the particle את to mean *upon*, and so the sense will be, "And God ordered (man) to bless and worship on the seventh day." So the other verb ויקדש, if taken in Hiphil, would be, "and ordered to sanctify, or set apart for sacred uses." (*Two Dissertations*, p. 125.) But *first* these verbs are not in the Hiphil, but Pihel conjugation: and *secondly* I do not find that את ever really means *upon*; nor does Noldius, as referred to by Dr. Kennicott, approve of such a signification of את. For these reasons I cannot assent to the Doctor's criticism.

imitation, is, in its very nature, authoritative upon every intelligent being. If God's resting on the seventh day was the reason why he blessed and sanctified it, it is a reason of equal cogency at all times, and equally applying to all the posterity of Adam. The reason for the benediction of that day was not stronger at the close of the creation, than at any future period of the world; and if it formed a just ground for sanctifying the first day which dawned upon the finished system of the universe, it must be equally so for sanctifying every seventh day to the end of time.

Again, if God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, BECAUSE he then rested from his demiurgic operations, that blessing and sanctification most likely took place immediately after the work of creation was completed. As the reason for it arose out of that transaction, the sanctification was in all probability coeval with its termination. It may not, perhaps, be warrantable to assert that the divine benediction must of necessity have been immediately consequent to the cause which gave occasion to it. Such a conclusion might be rash and precipitous, considering the imperfect view which the human mind can take of the operations of Deity; yet we may infer so much, that, as God clearly rested on the seventh day, on which account he sanctified it, it is most reasonable to believe the one to have been cotempora-

neous with the other. Thus, if the divine benediction of the seventh day was bestowed at all, no period can so probably be assigned as that which immediately followed the cause of it, which cause was God's resting after six days' labour; and if the sabbath was *then* enjoined, it cannot be regarded as a part of the peculiar polity of the Jews, but must be extended to the whole world.

But even supposing that it could be shewn that the command was not given till long afterwards, this circumstance would be very far from proving that it was not addressed by the Deity to all his creatures. There is nothing in the recital to limit the command to the Jewish nation: it is expressed in general terms, equally applicable to every other people, which would be unaccountable had it been designed only as a temporary institution. Had it been intended only for limited observance, it would scarcely have been conveyed in terms of such universal application as those in the beginning of the second chapter of Genesis; terms by which the seventh day is appropriated to the service of God, without an intimation of any restriction to one people more than another. In these observations, we have a satisfactory answer to those who object, that "the sanctification of the seventh day may signify the decree or determination of God to sanctify it in due time. But as Jeremy's actual sanctification, and St.

Paul's actual separation followed long after they were borne, so the actual sanctification of the sabbath might follow long after the ground of God's decree for the sanctification of that day, and the destination of it to that use [l]." Be it so; yet if God has set apart a particular day, without express limitation to a particular people, it is imperative upon every human being to observe it. The unlimited appropriation of it to religion by the Sovereign Lord, WHENEVER it took place, constitutes an universal obligation, not to be infringed, without heinous criminality in the creature. Should it, then, be conceded that the sanctification of the sabbath was only predetermined or destinated at the close of creation, as Archbishop Bramhall expresses it, while its actual sanctification followed long after, it will make no difference in the universality of the obligation, since it must ever be offensive in the sight of the Almighty, to reject the observance of a day which he has at any time unrestrictedly blessed and sanctified.

We know, from the infallible declaration of Scripture, that "the sabbath was made for man [m];" and as the Deity can derive no advantage from the sacred appropriation of the seventh day, it

[l] Archbishop Bramhall, *Discourse on the Sabbath, in Works*, p. 912. See Jurieu, *Histoire des Dogmes*, P. i. cap. xvi. p. 119.

[m] Mark ii. 27.

must clearly have been intended for the benefit of his rational creatures ; but this benefit could only partially accrue, except it were appointed an ordinance for ever. The sabbath, as appears from the very terms of the record in Genesis, was intended to commemorate the origination of the universe in six days, to preserve a sense of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God displayed in it, to afford a stated season of rest from worldly toil, and to form a regularly returning festival hallowed with religious services. In these respects it must be for ever equally useful, not more so to the Jew than the Gentile, to the bond than the free, nor in one age more than another, but will continue of the same high interest and importance in each successive generation of men. When can the celebration of it, therefore, be supposed to have commenced, but at the time immediately succeeding the transaction to be commemorated ? And can it be reconcileable with infinite goodness and mercy, to limit it to the peculiar polity of the Hebrew race ? A divinely appointed institution, the benefits of which are coextensive with mankind, one may well suppose, must, in the boundless beneficence of heaven, be designed for universal reception. It is idle to reply, that we are incompetent to determine how far the advantages of an institution may extend, or whether its effects are so beneficial to all as to

render it binding upon all; for we are not called upon in this argument to make such a scrutiny. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, it evidently implies some distinction, which, as it most unquestionably was not for the sake of the Deity himself, must be for the sake of man; and as it was the appointment of a benignant Creator, it must have been designed for the BENEFIT of man; but if such be the design of the institution, it is obligatory upon all in every place where the light of Revelation has been diffused.

It has also been frequently urged, that some portion of time is required by the law of nature to be allotted to the worship of the Deity, but, as this portion can only be determined by the Maker and Governor of the world, it cannot be thought that he would leave his creatures at any time without directions on a matter of such vast importance. As some particular day must be set apart for religious exercises, so religion requires some social duties as public prayer and worship; but such a union as the performance of these duties demands would be impossible, except the particular day were pointed out by the Almighty. Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that God would suffer his intelligent creatures to remain so many ages, as rolled on from the creation to the Exode, without an institution, from which not only many

advantages are derived, but which seems absolutely necessary to the maintenance of religion in the world.—Such are the arguments which have been urged by writers on this subject, to which it has been replied, that it is not more necessary for the Deity to prescribe the *portion of time* for religious services, than the *place*, which he has not thought fit to do, either under the Patriarchal or Christian dispensations: that there seems no more reason for the Deity to point out the *particular day* than the *particular place*, since both these circumstances might be left to the determination of the Patriarchs, just as the mode of sanctifying the sabbath was to that of the Israelites: and that the alleged improbability of God's suffering his creatures to remain for many ages without the benefits of a sabbath, is to decide upon what is fit and expedient in the divine proceedings, of which the human understanding is incompetent to judge.

Of these arguments different minds will entertain different opinions, nor is it easy, after duly weighing them, to say on which side they preponderate. To argue upon what is expedient or inexpedient in the divine operations is a mode of reasoning extremely fallacious, as it requires a knowledge of the whole of the case, which is impossible to the limited faculties of man. Without an insight into the divine counsels it is in vain

to decide on such points, for that which appears to us improper, may be, and no doubt is, right and expedient, could we know the deep things of the divine administration. This is clearly demonstrated by Bishop Butler in his *Analogy;* and if the arguments above stated assume such a power of deciding upon the fitness of the divine proceedings, they are so far built on fallacious ground. I am inclined to consider them in this light, and would not, therefore, lay much stress upon them. At all events they may be dispensed with, as, without them, abundance of positive reasons evince the permanent obligation of the sabbatical appointment from the Pentateuchal record of it[n].

[n] It has been often argued that the sabbath must have been prior to Moses, as the fourth commandment begins with referring to the prior observation of it, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy," as the proper rendering is, and not as in E. T. "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day." (Dr. Kennicott, *Two Dissertations*, p. 136.) From the same commandment Bishop Horsley argues that "the terms in which the reason of the ordinance [of the sabbath] is assigned plainly describe it as an institution of an earlier age: 'Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and *set it apart*.' (That is the true import of the word 'hallowed it.') These words, you will observe, express a past time. It is not said, 'Therefore the Lord *now* blesses the seventh day, and sets it apart;' but 'therefore he *did* bless it, and set it apart in time past; and he now requires that you his chosen people should be observant of that ancient institution.'" (*Sermon* xxii. vol. ii. p. 198.) A learned

In the conclusion, therefore, that the sabbath was instituted at the close of the creation, and enjoined upon all the posterity of the protoplastic pair, established as it is by evidence so satisfactory, the devout believers in Revelation are bound to acquiesce. No cavils, which profane

foreigner also observes, " Nullibi dicitur, quæ hac die ommittenda, et quæ agenda sint, quod arguit, hæc consuetudine nota fuisse." Jahn, *Archæologia Biblica*, § 346.

But to all these arguments, it may be replied, that the promulgation of the Decalogue from Mount Sinai was subsequent to the giving of manna for the sustenance of the Israelites in the wilderness, when the sabbath was commanded to be observed; (Exod. xvi.) and the phraseology of the fourth commandment *may* have reference to that transaction. When indeed it is proved that the sabbath was not instituted in the wilderness, the reference, if any, must be to its primæval institution: but still such reference in the fourth commandment to a prior observation of the sabbath, cannot, *in itself*, prove the antiquity and universality of the original institution. Supposing this established, the reference no doubt may be to it; but allowing the fact of such reference, it would be unfair to conclude that it *must* be to the institution of the sabbath in Genesis, as it *may* be to a subsequent institution in the wilderness.

To Bishop Horsley's reasoning it may also be objected, that the Hebrew preterite tense is too indefinite to be a safe ground for his conclusion; and to the observation of Jahn, that the omission he speaks of may have been owing to some other cause than the one assigned. If the " quæ ommittenda et agenda" were not specified for some other reason, as is certainly very possible, it will not follow that they were *previously* customary and well known.

ingenuity may delight to invent, should be allowed for a moment to shake a conviction resting upon the sound interpretation of the sacred Scriptures. Having discovered that the primæval sanctification of the sabbath is declared in the very commencement of the volume of inspiration, it is our duty to retain, in the confidence of humble piety, a truth which, like every other revealed in the book of life, is of vast importance. Highly interesting must it be to those who, bursting the shackles which enchain them to the world, are awakened to a deep sense of religion, to be assured of the divine origin of an institution so adapted to promote the happiness and spiritual good of man. At the origination of the present order of things, while the human race were yet in their pristine purity, and in the enjoyment of newly-bestowed existence, the sabbath was enjoined; it was to be observed in perpetual generations as the memorial of the celestial wisdom and benignity in creation; and the command will be gratefully obeyed by all who consult the sacred repose of their souls, till they attain the beatified rest in heaven, of which the sabbath on earth is a typical representation.

Though the sanctity of the sabbath remounts to the very infancy of the world, the inquiry remains, whether any alteration has been made in it by divine authority in the successive revelations

vouchsafed to man. From the patriarchal ages, then, we must descend to those of the Levitical dispensation. The sabbath was undoubtedly adopted by the Hebrew legislator, modified by certain regulations and ceremonies which distinguished its observance under the theocratic government. Was it to be abrogated with the essential ordinances of Judaism? Or, was there any thing accompanying it which marked it out as designed to survive the dissolution of that polity? These are questions in the solution of which Christians are deeply interested. But before entering upon this investigation it will be proper to inquire into the peculiarities of the Jewish sabbath, not only because these may have made some difference in the nature of the institution, but also because to these our Saviour and his apostles in what they deliver concerning it may be supposed to have had some reference. In the next chapter, therefore, it is proposed to examine the constitution of the sabbath under the Mosaic dispensation, and afterwards to inquire whether it was designed to be abrogated with, or to survive the extinction of the Jewish polity.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SABBATICAL INSTITUTION UNDER THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

SECT. I.

Of the Jewish Sabbath.

THE word "sabbath" has an extensive signification in the inspired writings, being applied to all the festivals, or times of sacred rest, ordained under the Mosaic dispensation[o]; in particular, to the feast of unleavened bread[p], to the annual day of atonement on the tenth of the month Tizri[q], and to the feast of trumpets which was celebrated on the first day of the seventh month[r]. It also denotes the sabbatical year, which was kept among the Hebrews by allowing the land to rest every seventh year without cultivation[s]; and in

[o] Exod. xxxi. 13. Levit. xix. 3, 30.—xxvi. 2. Isaiah i. 13. Ezek. xx. 12, 13.

[p] Levit. xxiii. 15.

[q] Ibid. 32.

[r] Ibid. 24.

[s] Levit. xxv. 2, 4. xxvi. 34.

the New Testament it is sometimes used for a week [1]; but it most commonly denotes the seventh day, which was consecrated to Jehovah under the Jewish economy; in which acceptation it is used in the present section, though in other parts of this inquiry it is applied, for the sake of convenience, in a larger sense to denote the septenary rest, whether under the Patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian dispensations.

The sanctity of the sabbath, as we have seen, remounts to the beginning of the world, yet in considering it as adopted by the Jewish legislator, it is not very material what period may be assigned for the original command. Whether it was instituted immediately upon the first production of all things, or subsequently to the Exode at Marah, or on the occasion of raining manna, or at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, it makes little difference with respect to the object of this section, the design of which is to describe it as forming a part of the peculiar law of Moses. It was undoubtedly a festival under the Mosaic polity, and it is now proposed to investigate the time of its celebration, the peculiar services and ceremonies with which it was accompanied, and the object of its appointment.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 1. Luke xviii. 12.—xxiv. 1. John xx. 1, 19. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. in the Greek text.

I. Whether the Jewish sabbath was actually celebrated on the seventh day in the hebdomadal revolution from the commencement of time, is, perhaps, impossible to be determined. Some suppose that the primeval or paradisiacal sabbath was, according to the true computation, that which is now called the first day of the week, or Sunday, celebrated by Christians, and that the Almighty, for wise reasons, changed the day when he appropriated it to the peculiar ritual of the Jews. But it may well be doubted whether we are furnished with sufficient data for deciding this question; for, when all things are taken into the account, the difficulty of such calculations, the imperfection of ancient astronomy, the design of revelation, and the brevity of the sacred history, the decision would seem to be but barely within the range of possibility. It would scarcely amuse the reader to recapitulate the slender conjectures, for they are nothing more, which learned men have advanced on a subject so intricate, and which, after all, is a matter of inferior moment[u]. It is enough for our purpose to observe that the Jewish sabbath was kept on the day in the hebdomadal cycle answering to our Saturday. This is confirmed by the undeviating current of history,

[u] A succinct statement of them may be found in Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. iii. cap. 3.

and the same day has been religiously observed by every generation of the Hebrew race to the present time.

It does not, however, exactly correspond to our Saturday, for their mode of reckoning the diurnal revolution was different from the modern custom. We begin the day from midnight, whereas the Hebrews computed their days from evening to evening. Accordingly the Israelites were commanded to begin their sabbaths in the same manner; "from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath[x]." But this direction is not altogether devoid of obscurity, as the Jews reckoned two evenings, the former beginning about the ninth hour of the natural day, or three o'clock in the afternoon, and the other about the eleventh hour of the natural day, or between five and six in the afternoon. Of these two evenings we often read in the Old Testament; as for instance, the Paschal lamb was to be sacrificed between the evenings[y], though in another passage the time specified is "at even, at the going down of the sun[z]," from which it appears that the whole time comprehended between the two evenings was also called simply "the evening[a]." Now the law requiring

[x] Levit. xxiii. 32.

[y] Exod. xii. 6. Levit. xxiii. 5. in the Heb.

[z] Deut. xvi. 6.

[a] Dr. Hales, *Analysis of Chronology*, vol. i. p. 114.

the Jews to number their sabbaths "from even to even" implies, that the commencement of the sabbath was to be reckoned from the termination of the whole time called "the evening," and "between the evenings;" consequently the sabbath or sacred rest, began after sunset on Friday evening, and ended at the same time on Saturday evening.

The eve of the sabbath commenced with the first of the two Jewish evenings, about three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time of the evening sacrifice, and lasted till sunset. This is called the *preparation*, because the people during that time ceased from their ordinary labour, cooked their victuals, and prepared whatever was requisite for the due observance of the sabbatical rest[b]. Some, indeed, are of opinion that the preparation included the whole of the Friday, and the subject is confessedly involved in some degree of uncertainty. The most probable solution of the difficulty, perhaps, is, that the preparation, properly so called, commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, but that the whole day was sometimes from this circumstance so denominated[c].

[b] All these offices of the preparation are minutely described by Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica*, cap. 15. See also Ikenius, *Antiq. Heb.* P. i. cap. xx. § 22. et seq.

[c] "Parasceve Sabbathi vel integrum diem Sabbathum ante-

II. Among the services and duties required by the law of Moses on the sabbath-day, none are so conspicuous as the strictness of the rest which was enjoined. The command is, " in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates[d]." No legislator, who followed the dictates of mere human policy, would enjoin a rest so strict and absolute, nor would any people tamely submit to a merely human ordinance, requiring a restriction to all appearance so unnecessary, and so injurious to the interests and happiness of man. The rigour of this and other laws in the Levitical code would never have been endured by a people so little disposed to quiet submission as the Israelites, except they had been convinced, by indubitable testimony, that Moses, in whatever he commanded, was under the immediate guidance of the Deity. But the most strict and intire rest was required on the sabbath; it is enjoined with a frequency which shews the importance

cedentem, vel extremam et vespertinam illius diei partem ab hora nona computandam usque ad solis occasum, μερικῶς notabat. Hoc sensu parasceve Sabbathi incepisse legitur ab hora nona diei Veneris." Deylingius, *Observationes Sacræ*, P. I. Obs. 52. See Pearson, *Expos. of the Creed*, vol. ii. p. 339, note (o) edit. 8vo. Oxford. 1797.

[d] Exod. xx. 10.

attached to it[e]; and the severest penalties are denounced against its violation. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord; whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day he shall surely be put to death[f]." The command to abstain from all manner of work is so far from being mitigated by any subsequent law, that the most rigid interpretation of it appears to be sanctioned by inspired authority. Thus we find in the sacred writings prohibitions against

Buying and selling. In the book of Nehemiah we read that those who separated themselves from the people of the lands to the law of God, "entered into a curse and into an oath" that "if the people of the land brought ware or any victuals on the sabbath-day to sell, they would not buy it on the sabbath, or on the holy-day[g]." And in another place Nehemiah declares the selling of victuals and all manner of ware on the sabbath-day was a profanation of it, by which they would bring wrath upon Israel[h].

Kindling fires. "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the sabbath-day[i]."

[e] Exod. xxiii. 12.—xxxiv. 21. Deut. v. 14.

[f] Exod. xxxi. 15. So ver. 14. and chap. xxxv. 2.

[g] Neh. x. 28—31.

[h] Neh. xiii. 15—22.

[i] Exod. xxxv. 3.

This, however, must be understood with some limitation; for fire was absolutely necessary for the sabbatical sacrifices, and it would have been a breach of the divine law of mercy not to kindle a fire for the sick and infirm [k]. The meaning of the precept, therefore, is that no fire was to be kindled on the sabbath-day for cooking meat, which is elsewhere forbidden, or for any other servile purpose. The conceit of some of the Rabbins, that it is a prohibition against the punishment of malefactors on the sabbath is ridiculous; yet ridiculous as it is, some have actually explained it as a command not to burn on the sabbath those who are condemned to be burned [l]. The law implies no more than that fires were not to be made on the sabbath for the purpose of doing what would be a violation of the sabbatical rest.

Cooking victuals. The statute is, "to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord:

[k] Some have observed that Nehemiah had such provision made every day as could not be dressed nor eaten without some fire on the sabbath (Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ*, P. 4. Thesis 7.) but Nehemiah only says "that which was prepared for me daily was one ox, &c. (ch. v. 18.) which imports that such was the daily provision prepared for him, though it might be, and doubtless was, dressed the day before the sabbath.

[l] Maimonides, *De Sabbatho*, cap. xxiv. § 7.; Ainsworth, *Annot. on Exod.* xxxv. 3.

bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning [m]." Both this law and that against kindling fires on the sabbath were, as Michaelis observes, especially calculated for the climate of Palestine. As the sabbath began at sun-set, and in Palestine the sun in the shortest days never sets before five o'clock, nor in the longest before seven, the Jews there might have their principal meal, call it either *cœna*, "supper," or "dinner," prepared in the afternoon of Friday; for between the summer and winter months there would only be a difference of about two hours. By lighting good fires on the Friday afternoon, they might also be very comfortable till the sabbath evening. But in our northern climates, these would be very grievous prohibitions [n].

Menial Work. Besides the general law against all manner of work, we find the following direction: "Thus saith the Lord, take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath-day, neither do ye any work; but hal-

[m] Exod. xvi. 23.

[n] Michaelis, *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, Art. 195.

low ye the sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers [o]."

THE EMPLOYMENT OF BEASTS. "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed [p]." Such was the benevolent reason for enjoining a cessation of labour upon all foreigners residing in the land of Judæa, and upon the beasts of burden. Neither man, nor the brute creation, were to be deprived of rest, or to be tortured with unremitting toil. Such alternation of labour and rest is necessary to dumb animals as well as to man; for, if they are continually employed in labour, they become weak, stupid, and useless. If they are hard worked every day, they cannot hold out long, but with intervening days of rest they will be active and serviceable for a length of time. A horse for instance, as is well known, will in the same space of time travel much farther without injury, if allowed regular days of rest, than he can if employed daily. "Hence," as Michaelis observes, "the good treatment of beasts enjoined in the Mosaic law, and the sabbatical rest ordained for their refreshment was high-

[o] Jer. xvii. 21, 22. Compare Neh. x. 31.—xiii. 15.

[p] Exod. xxiii. 12.—So Exod. xx. 10.—Deut. v. 13, 14.

ly expedient, even in an economical point of view, and wisely suited to the circumstances of a people, whose cattle formed the principal part of their subsistence [q]."

TRAVELLING. The law enjoins that the Israelites should stay at home on the sabbath; "abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day [r]." This statute was given in the wilderness on the occasion of raining manna, and the obvious meaning is, that the Israelites were not on that day to leave their tents for the purpose of gathering manna, or of doing any servile work, but to remain within their precincts, and to devote the time to religious duties. But the Hebrew doctors have built many absurd fancies upon this prohibition, such as, that it was unlawful for a man to go from any town or village where he resides, farther than a 1000 cubits, or about an English mile, and that in whatever posture they may be on the sabbath morning, they are to continue in it during the remainder of the day. These conceits are foreign from the meaning of the Jewish legislator, who, in the passage above cited, merely forbids such travelling as

[q] Michaelis, *Comm. on the Laws of Moses*, Art. 167. See also Art. 195.

[r] Exod. xvi. 29.

would interfere with the rest and duties of the festival [s].

GATHERING STICKS. In Numbers xv. 32—36, we read, that while the people were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day, and brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation. Moses consulted the Lord, who commanded him to be put to death; in consequence of which, "the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him

[s] Our Saviour says, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day;" (Matt. xxiv. 20.) for which various reasons have been assigned, as may be seen in Pool, Wolfius, Koecherus, Kuinoël, &c. But, however it may be explained, it has undoubtedly a reference to the opinions and practices of the Jews of that age concerning the sabbath day's journey; and the general sense is, that, in consequence of the existing prejudices of the Jews, it would be dangerous to fly on the sabbath day. The mention of "a sabbath day's journey," in Acts i. 12. is likewise an allusion to the then custom of the Jews; and neither of these texts give any support to the Rabbinical interpretation of Exod. xvi. 29. Those who may be curious to investigate the extent, &c. of a sabbath day's journey, may consult, in addition to the commentators, Voightius, *De Via Sabbathi;* Walther, *De Itinere Sabbathi in Thesaur. Theol. Philol.* vol. ii. p. 417 and 423. et seq.; Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. iii. cap. ix.; Buxtorf, *Synag. Judric.* cap. xvi. and *Lex. Chald. Rab. et Talm.* p. 2582. et seq.; Sigonius, *De Republ. Hebræor.* lib. v. cap. xi.; Lightfoot, *Works*, vol. i. p. 252; Meyer, *De Festis Hebræor.* P. ii. cap. ix. § 39, 40.

with stones, and he died." As the inspired historian has not informed us either of the object which the man had in gathering sticks, or the motive which influenced him to it, it is idle to indulge in conjecture concerning the specific nature of the offence. Nor is it necessary for us to know more than that it was a breach of the sabbatical rest which it pleased the Almighty to visit with the severe, but just penalty, which he had threatened against those who violated that commandment.

It has been maintained, particularly by the Rabbins, that war is to be classed among the works prohibited on the sabbath by the Levitical statutes; but Michaelis, in opposition to this, argues with great force, that it is inconceivable how a state could subsist under such a law, as it would neither be secure against invaders, nor against the disturbers of the public peace on the sabbath; that the word "service" (עבודה) gives no handle for even thinking of war; that if they had held warlike operations unlawful on the sabbath, we should frequently have read in their history, of their enemies having availed themselves of the advantage of attacking them on that day, whereas we hear of no such thing in any of their wars previous to the Babylonian captivity; and that, if an individual by the law of nature might defend himself against an assault, it would be absurd to suppose the Deity would prohibit a nation

from exercising the same right upon which life or death, liberty or slavery, depended [t]. These reasons seem to vindicate satisfactorily the lawfulness of military operations on the sabbath; but the Jews, after their restoration from captivity in Babylonia, construed the law so strictly, as to forbid, not only all offensive warfare, but even self-defence on that day. In the age of the Maccabees, 1000 persons suffered themselves to be slain without making the least resistance; upon which Mattathias and his followers, foreseeing the inevitable destruction which would ensue if they acted upon this principle, came to a general determination to repel by force any attack that was made upon them on the sabbath [u]. To this determination they adhered when Jerusalem was attacked by Pompey, who abstained from all hostilities on that day, and employed his army in carrying on the works for a siege, to which the Jews made no opposition; and, in the opinion of Josephus, the city was captured in consequence of this stratagem [x]. On several occasions besides these, as is shewn by Michaelis and others, the Jews acted upon the notion, that offensive war was unlawful

[t] Michaelis, *Comm. on the Laws of Moses*, Art. 196.

[u] 1 Macc. ii. 39—41; Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xii. cap. vi. § 2, 3.

[x] Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xiv. cap. iv. § 2.; Prideaux, *Connexion*, lib. vi.

on the sabbath, though they appear in this, as in other instances, to have construed their law with a superstitious rigour [y].

Notwithstanding the strictness of the sabbatical command, it would be unreasonable to suppose it designed to exclude works of necessity and charity. The Jewish code, it is acknowledged, contains no express statute relating to such works; but the former must, in the nature of things, be exempt from punishment, because devoid of criminality; and no human legislator, much less the King of kings, would, upon any occasion, forbid the performance of the other. It cannot be believed that a Being of infinite benignity would ever consider his laws violated by actions proceeding from motives of pure benevolence, and which at the same time administered to the good of a fellow-creature. The numerous exhortations in the Old Testament, to the exercise of all the kindlier dispositions, and particularly of mercy to the poor, sufficiently prove how acceptable are

[y] Mr. Sumner argues that, as the sabbatical enactments rendered the Israelites, in every human view, an easy prey to their enemies, no legislator, acting upon his own authority, would have endangered the state by such a law, and that this law consequently proves both the necessity and existence of a superintending Providence; (*Records of Creation*, chap. iii. sect. 4.) but if the law did not forbid war on the sabbath, the foundation of this reasoning will be subverted. It is at least very unstable ground.

actions of that description in the sight of God. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor:" "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it:" "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he:" "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, He will repay him:" "The just man is he that hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment[z]." In these, and a multitude of other passages, charity is required universally, at all seasons, without limitation; and surely the Divine Being, by whose inspiration they were uttered, could not be offended with a charitable deed, because it was performed on the sabbath day. The Jews, however, at the time of our Saviour, appear to have misconstrued the law in regard to this subject, for they accused him of profaning the sabbath, by performing miraculous cures upon it[a].

[z] Ps. xli. 1. Prov. iii. 27.—xiv. 21.—xix. 17. Ezek. xviii. 7. Compare also Ps. cxii. 9. Prov. xi. 24, 25.—xiv. 31.—xxii. 9.—xxviii. 27.—xxix. 7. Eccles. xi. i. Isa. xxxii. 8.—lviii. 6—12.

[a] The Rabbins maintain the lawfulness of works of charity, but with certain restrictions, which often are productive of great cruelty. (Leusden, *Hebræo-Mixtus*. Diss. xxxvi. § 10. p. 259.) They clearly allow works of necessity. (See Mishna, *Tract. Sab.* cap. xviii.; Maimonides, cap. ii. § 23.; Leusden, *ibid.*; Buxtorf, *Synag. Jud.* cap. xvi. p. 365.; Ikenius, *Antiq. Heb.* P. i. cap. xx. § 27.) Whatever may be the opinions of the Rab-

With respect to recreations, no express permission is found in the law of Moses, but that they were, at least to a certain extent, allowable, may be inferred from several considerations. As a total abstinence from all amusement would render it a day of gloom and sadness, productive of melancholy rather than of religious comfort, no such enactment, it may be presumed, would be promulged by a benevolent Deity. It did, indeed, assume an aspect of this forbidding appearance, in consequence of the minute and scrupulous observances of the Pharisees, so strongly reprobated by our Saviour; but the law of God does not prohibit those relaxations, without which the sabbath would be more toilsome to the body, more depressing to the spirits, than the six days' labour. The design of the institution was to afford an hebdomadal respite from toil, not only to the Israelites, but to servants and strangers, that they might "be refreshed;" and something to amuse and recreate is indispensable for this purpose [b]. In some cases the seventh day was appointed by statute to be

bins, we are assured by infallible authority, that works of necessity and charity are allowable and right on the sabbath. Matt. xii. 1—13. Mark ii. 27. Luke xiii. 15.—xiv. 3—16. John v. 8—18.—vii. 22.—ix. 14.

[b] Exod. xxiii. 12.

kept a feast unto the Lord[c]; and the sabbath is numbered among the Jewish feasts or festivals, in all of which they were commanded to rejoice[d]. To the same purpose is the text of Isaiah: "Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel[e]." Zechariah declares, that different fasts "shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts[f]." From all these circumstances it is but just to conclude, that, according to the Mosaic law, the sabbath was to be not only a day of rest, but also of innocent enjoyment.

But the Jews, it is said on the other hand, were forbid from "doing their own ways, or finding their own pleasure, or speaking their own words[g];" which, it is thought, is to be understood of recreations and diversions, and of talking about worldly matters. Three things, it is perfectly clear, are here condemned by the prophet. Of these the first, "doing their own ways," means the re-

[c] Exod. xiii. 6. Numb. xxix. 12. Deut. xvi. 13—15. 2 Chron. xxx. 21.

[d] Compare Levit. xxiii. 2, 4, 37. with Deut. xvi. 11, 14.—Lam. ii. 7.

[e] Isa. xxx. 29.

[f] Zech. viii. 19. Compare Amos viii. 10.

[g] Isaiah lviii. 13.

fraining from the usual business or way of life; the second, "finding their own pleasure," upon which the objection chiefly depends, denotes the pursuing one's own will, pleasure, or inclination, in opposition, as the context shews, to the commands of God; and the third, "speaking their own words," means the speaking vain, unprofitable, or injurious words. The prophet, therefore, only condemns the pursuit of worldly affairs, and the indulgence of such inclinations and pleasures as are contrary to those holy purposes for which the sabbath was designed [h]. He forbids such ways as are opposite to the true way, such pleasures as are contrary to those which are spiritual, and such language as is impure and unholy; but his phraseology cannot fairly be construed in the sense of prohibiting what contributes to harmless enter-

[h] That the Jews of our Saviour's time were wont to make entertainments on the sabbath day, and to invite their acquaintances, may be gathered from Luke xiv. i.; (See Wetstein and Lightfoot in loc.) and both Philo and Josephus consider feastings and rejoicings as essential to the celebration of the sabbath. (Philo, *De Decalogo*, p. 585. B. C. *De Migrat. Abrahami.* p. 315. A. *De Propigis*, p. 371. C. Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xi. cap. v. § 5. lib. xiii. cap. xi. § 1.) The more modern Jews have converted it into a day of festive entertainments, and often of revelry and merriment. See Buxtorf, *Synag. Jud.* cap. xv. p. 312.; Spencer, *De Leg. Heb.* lib. i. cap. iv. § 10.; Leusden, *Heb. Mixt.* Diss. xxxv. § 8. p. 253; Heylin, *Hist. of the Sab.* P. i. cap. v. § 8. et seq.

tainment even in the sabbath day [1]. The law of Moses, then, with all its severity, is so far indulgent to the weakness of human nature, as to allow whatever recreations are innocent and compatible with the sanctity of a day, which the Almighty has commanded to be kept holy.

Hence, though the sabbath was ordained to be a day of complete cessation from all bodily labours, and secular employment, neither works of necessity nor charity were forbidden, and such recreations were allowed as are necessary for the refreshment of nature. The Jewish doctors, indeed, inculcate the sabbatical rest still more rigorously,

[1] The second phrase in the Hebrew is ממצוא חפצך, and unquestionably denotes the pursuing what is agreeable to one's own inclination, which, as it is condemned, must refer to what is opposed to the will of God. "Sententia hujus loquendi generis *invenire voluntatem suam*, est, id consequi, quod cupis, nulla habita ratione sanctimoniæ sabbathi, ita ut cuivis operi manus admoveatur." Rosenmüller, *Scholia* in loc. So Le Clerc, Dr. Gill, and others. The last phrase in the Hebrew is ודבר דבר which means either to use unprofitable and injurious language, as understood by LXX. Targ. Arab. Lowth, Dodson, &c. or, as others think, to talk of the subjects mentioned in the two preceding clauses; and in either case the meaning is, that the Jews were to use pious discourse on that day, and not to indulge in useless or pernicious talk. [See Le Clerc *in loco*.] The version of Dathe is: "eum (sabbatum) vita vestra honoretis, abstinentes a rebus vobis caris, et ne quidem de iis loquamini," which is approved by Rosenmüller and Bauer.

and deliver a multiplicity of trifling and superstitious precepts, which it would be a waste of time to cite, as they have no other foundation than the fancy of dreaming Rabbins, or some Pharisaical tradition no less absurd [k].

The duty of sanctifying the sabbath is expressly commanded: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," and "keep the sabbath day to sanctify it [l]." It is the same word in Hebrew which in these texts is translated "to keep holy," and "to sanctify," and according to its acknowledged signification, the meaning is, that the seventh day was to be separated from common to sacred uses; and the only question is, in what way, or by what means it was to be so appropriated. Some contend that the sanctification of the sabbath, as prescribed in the Mosaic law, consisted in abstaining from all kinds of work and labour; and the phraseology of the statutes on the subject is not absolutely inconsistent with this opinion [m]. In other passages also, it is said

[k] These may be seen in Mishna, *Tract. Sabbath;* Maimonides, *De Sabbato;* Hulsius, *Theol. Judaica,* p. 240. et seq.; Buxtorf, *Syn. Judaica,* cap. xv. and xvi.; Calmet, *Dict. in Sabbath;* Ainsworth, *Annot.* in Exod. xx. 10.; Jennings, *Jewish Antiq.* lib. iii. cap. iii.; Allen, *Modern Judaism,* cap. xix.; Levi, *Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews,* p. 7. et seq.

[l] Exod. xx. 8. Deut. v. 12. Compare Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.

[m] Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere,* lib. i. P. 2. cap. ii. p. 293.

to abstain from work, and to hallow or sanctify it, appear to be expressions of the same import, as Jeremiah, "Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers[n];" where doing no work on the sabbath day, and hallowing it, seem to be used as equivalent expressions. Yet this interpretation is far from reaching the full signification of the word "to sanctify," which denotes, not only to separate from common use, but likewise to appropriate to the more immediate service of God. To hallow the day, therefore, does not consist in a mere cessation from the common business of life; it is not only to refrain from worldly labour, but to engage in such religious exercises as are proper to a day spent in the immediate service of God. Hence abstinence from work, so far from being the sole, is only one of the means of sanctifying the sabbath.

To this interpretation it is objected by Vitringa, that the Lord commands the fiftieth year to be hallowed or sanctified, which does not necessarily imply the separation of the year to the exercises of religion, and therefore the sanctification of the

et seq.; Le Clerc, *Comment. in Exod.* xx. 8.; Beausobre and Lenfant, *Introd. to New Test.* p. 158.

[n] Jer. xvii. 22. Compare ver. 24.

seventh day, does not import such an appropriation [o]. But this text of Leviticus, it should seem, rather leads to a contrary conclusion. As it would be impossible to observe throughout the whole year the same strict rest that is enjoined on the sabbath, the hallowing of the jubilee year must mean something else than a cessation from labour. Now several duties are required by the just cited statute in Leviticus, the performance of which is necessarily included in the command, "to hallow the fiftieth year;" consequently this phrase imports something more than a mere abstinence from labour, and of course gives no countenance to the notion, that to rest on the sabbath is the only thing meant by the command to sanctify it. If the word "to sanctify" denotes, as has before been shewn, to separate from common to sacred uses, it cannot be conceived how the seventh day can be so separated, without being dedicated to religious services. Vitringa in fact gives up his own exposition in conceding that those, who were actuated by right reason, would naturally be impelled to those exercises on the sabbath day, which they knew were acceptable to the Deity, as prayer, celebrating his perfections, meditating upon his works, speaking of his ways, and exhorting one another to piety.

[o] *De Synagoga Vetere*, lib. i. P. 2. cap. ii. p. 293. Levit. xxv. 10.

He further allows, that the people were on that day especially invited to the offices of religion by various circumstances, as the augmentation of the daily sacrifices, and the design of the sabbatical institution [p]. If such pious exercises on the sabbath are consentaneous to the common reason of mankind, it is only reasonable to believe them to be implied in the statute which enacts it to be kept holy unto the Lord.

Though religious offices are unquestionably included in the command to sanctify the sabbath day, the Mosaic law, it is granted, gives few explicit directions concerning the nature of these services. Rites, ceremonies, and regulations in abundance may be found in the Talmudical writers, but our business is only with those which are prescribed by divine authority in the sacred Scriptures, and they are much fewer than antecedently might have been supposed. In the service of the temple, certain occupations were permitted which, in those not so engaged, would be a violation of

[p] *De Synagoga Vetere*, lib. i. P. 2. cap. ii. p. 295, 296. The passage, is too long to quote. The Hebrew doctors believe that something more than a mere rest from labour is implied in the command to sanctify the seventh day. Philo, *De Vita Mosis*, lib. iii. p. 530. A.; Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xvi. cap. ii. § 4. *Contra Apion.* lib. i. § 22. and the concurring sentiments of many Rabbins are cited in Cartwright, *Electa Thargumico-Rabbinica*, p. 245, 517. and in Vitringa, *De Syn. Vet.* lib. i. P. 2. cap. ii.

the rest to be observed on that day. Thus it was allowed to prepare whatever was necessary for the sacrifices, as slaying the victims, cleansing the vessels, and in short the priesthood might do whatever pertained to their liturgical duties [q]. The prescription of certain ceremonial observances of necessity permits whatever is requisite for their performance. It is also specifically enjoined, that the loaves of the shew-bread should be set in order before the Lord every sabbath continually [r]; and that the daily sacrifice should be doubled. "On the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath beside the continual burnt-offering and his drink-offering [s]." These are all the alterations which the sabbath made, agreeably to the law of Moses, in the administration of the Hebrew ritual.

With respect to the people individually, they were chiefly left at liberty as to the mode of sanctifying the sabbath day. Since no reservation is made in those rites for which a set time is

[q] Levit. xxiv. 3, 4. 2 Chron. xxiii. 8. 2 Kings xi. 5—9.

[r] Levit. xxiv. 5—9. 1 Chron. ix. 32.

[s] Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. See 2 Chron. ii. 4.—viii. 13.—xxxi. 3. Neh. x. 33. Ezek. xlv. 17.

prescribed, as for instance, circumcision, they were undoubtedly lawful; but, independently of abstinence from labour, no especial ordinances are commanded for the celebration of the hebdomadal feast. Though obligated to keep it holy, the Israelites were permitted to follow their own discretion as to the means which they might adopt for this purpose. Against this, I am perfectly aware, a passage in Leviticus has been alleged, where it is stated that "the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons [t]."

In this statute the sabbath is ordered to be "an holy convocation," the meaning of which has been a subject of dispute. Vitringa supposes the seventh day was so denominated, because it was publicly proclaimed to be holy; Le Clerc thinks that the sabbatical convocation was an assembly for feasting and pleasure; while others take it for

[t] Levit. xxiii. 1. et seq.

a place of public worship [n]. In order to arrive at a sound decision amid these conflicting opinions, it is requisite to investigate the meaning of the phrase according to Biblical usage. The word in the statute rendered "convocation" occurs twenty-two times in the whole, and, being derived from a verb denoting *to invite, to name, to call, to proclaim,* must signify the thing proclaimed or called. Now this can only be *an assembly, a festival,* or *the proclamation itself,* for there is nothing else to which it can be applied. In the last of these senses, the proclamation itself or subject matter proclaimed, it is only used, Numb. x. 2.—Nehemiah viii. 8.; the remaining question, then, is, whether in the other texts it is applied to a festival, or an assembly.

In favour of the latter sense, that of *an assembly,* it may be said in the first place, that it not only *may* denote an assembly, conventus, cœtus, in all the passages where it is found, with the exception of the two already referred to, but that it is particularly appropriate in that sense. In the next place the phraseology in some of the texts where it occurs seems to distinguish it from the festival itself, as for instance, "And in the first

[n] Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet.* lib. i. P. ii. cap. ii. p. 290.; Le Clerc, *Comment. in Exod.* xx. 8.; Leydecker, *De Republ. Hebræor,* lib. xviii. cap. v. § 2.

day (i. e. of the passover) there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you [x]." The expressions *in* or *on* such a day shall be an holy convocation, appear to designate this convocation to be something different from the festival itself, which, it is reasonable to suppose, was an assembly for public worship. Lastly, the following text in Isaiah can scarcely have any other meaning: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, (*Heb.* convocations) a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night [y]." Here it cannot signify a proclamation, and since it is contradistinguished to the dwelling place of Zion, it must surely be applied in the sense ascribed to it in the authorized version [z]. If, then, the word which our translators render "convocation," really means "an assembly," the epithet "holy" annexed to it must be allowed to restrict it to assemblies held for religious offices.

To these reasons, however, it may be replied,

[x] Exod. xii. 16. See also Levit. xxiii. 7, 8, 24, 35, 36. Numb. xxviii. 18, 25, 26—xxix. 1, 7, 12.

[y] Isaiah iv. 5.

[z] With the English translation agree Vitringa, Gill, Lowth, Dodson, Boothroyd, Le Clerc, Doederlein, Dathe; but LXX. Vulg. Targ. Arab. Rosenmüller, some in Poli *Synop.*, understand it of a place.

that the first is rather a matter of opinion than argument; that the second is not decisive, since, supposing that in the texts cited it does not denote a festival, it may mean "a proclamation:" as for example, when it is said, that *in* or *on* such a day shall be a holy convocation, it may only signify, that on the day specified public proclamation shall be made of its being a festival holy to the Lord; and that the last reason, even allowing the correctness of the authorized version of the text from Isaiah, will not prove that the word has the same signification in the Pentateuch. To these observations it must likewise be added, that in some cases it seems to be applied to the festival, as when it is said "the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation." "These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations." "These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations [a]."

From this review of the texts where the word מקרא, *convocation*, occurs, it appears doubtful whether, in the statute recorded in Leviticus, it signifies a *religious assembly*, or *a proclaimed holy-day*. This uncertainty might be removed were we acquainted with the practice of the ancient Jewish church; for it cannot be thought that the law was misunderstood while inspired men were

[a] Levit. xxiii. 3, 4. 37. So ver. 2. 27. Isaiah i. 13.

its guardians and interpreters. But though this practice would furnish the best commentary on the enactment in question, the Old Testament affords no proof, that it was the custom to hold religious assemblies on the sabbath-day. It has, indeed, been argued from the Shunamite's husband inquiring, why she desired to go to Elisha's house when it was neither new moon nor sabbath, that it was then customary to frequent the houses of the prophets on the sabbath-day for the sake of public worship[b]; but the circumstances of the transaction do not warrant such a conclusion. The sabbath was a day of rest and disengagement, when the people in general would have more leisure than at any other time to seek advice and direction from the divinely-commissioned teachers of the nation. All, therefore, that can with justice be inferred from the history is, that it was usual to consult the prophets on such seasons for religious instruction.

The Priests and Levites were the public teachers, for to them Moses expressly assigns this office; "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law[c];" and as they had allotted to them forty-eight cities in different parts of the land, some have supposed that this was to enable the people of each district to assemble with great-

[b] 2 Kings iv. 23. See Le Clerc and Poli *Synop. in loc.*

[c] Deut. xxxiii. 10.

er convenience for the performance of religious offices [d]. But the sacerdotal cities were situated in the territories of Simeon, Judah, and Benjamin, which would hardly have been the case, had they been intended for the purpose just now mentioned. At any rate, it is a merely gratuitous supposition, to which, in the absence of other arguments, very little weight can justly be attached.

If it were permitted to infer the ancient practice from that which obtained in the Jewish church in our Saviour's time, the dispute might be easily decided; for it was most undoubtedly customary in that age to assemble in stated places on the sabbath-day for sacred and religious purposes. Thus it was usual to offer up their devotions on the sabbath, where prayer was wont to be made [e], and to reason or dispute on religious subjects [f]. It was the day set apart for teaching and admonishing the people [g]; and we are told that the law was read and expounded every sabbath-day [h]. These testimonies clearly demonstrate the use of sabbatical assemblies for divine worship at the Christian era.

[d] Numb. xxxv. 1—8. Josh. xxi. 1. et seq.

[e] Acts xvi. 13.

[f] Acts xviii. 4.

[g] Mark i. 21. vi. 2. Luke iv. 16. et seq. Acts xiii. 14. et seq.

[h] Acts xiii. 27. xv. 21.

The learned men of the Hebrew nation also believe that congregational worship on the sabbath was enforced by their inspired legislator. Philo declares that all persons belonging to the polity which Moses established should spend the seventh day in repose and festive delights, not in profane amusements, but in the study of true philosophy; and a little farther he says, "that it was the custom, especially on the sabbath-day, to apply to the study of wisdom, the governor setting the example, and teaching what is proper to be done and spoken, and the rest attending to the lessons of virtue and to the correction of their lives and manners; from which time to the present the Jews on the sabbath-days study the philosophy of their country, and devote that season to the knowledge and contemplation of nature: for in every city there are places destined for prayer[i]." Again, as reported by Eusebius, Philo says that their legislator "commanded them on the seventh day to assemble together, and to listen to the recital of the law, with modest silence that nothing may escape them. This custom of assembling together they still follow, and the multitude keep silence, except when they receive with acclamations something that is read to them.

[i] Philo Judæus, *De Vita Mosis*, lib. iii. p. 529. E. 530. A. See also *De Decalogo*, p. 585. B. *De Mundi Opificio*, p. 15. et seq.

Some one of the priests or elders recites the sacred laws, and expounds them, till in the evening they separate, instructed in the knowledge of the divine laws, and confirmed in piety[k]." Josephus likewise quotes Agatharchides as saying that "the Jews are accustomed to rest on every seventh day; on which times they make no use of their arms, nor meddle with husbandry, nor take care of any affairs of life, but spread out their hands in their holy places, and pray till the evening[l]." The more modern Rabbins maintain that the sanctity of the sabbath, according to the law, consisted in part in religious assemblies for the purpose of worship and edification; of which abundant evidence may be found in the authors named in the margin[m].

But neither the authority of the Jewish doctors, nor the practice of the Jewish church in the time of Christ, can be considered as decisive of the question. Though the former is in many instances strong corroborative attestation, it scarcely in the present case brings the scales to an equipoise; and the existence of a practice in the

[k] Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangel.* lib. viii. cap. vii.

[l] Josephus, *contra Apion.* lib. i. § 22. See also *Antiq.* lib. xvi. cap. ii. § 4.

[m] Cartwright, *Electa Thargumico-Rabbin.* p. 245. 417.; Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet.* lib. i. P. 2. cap. ii.; Meyer, *De Festis Hebræor.* P. 2. cap. ix. § 60. et seq.

earlier periods of the Mosaic economy cannot be inferred from its prevalence in the time of our Saviour; and least of all does it prove it to have been enjoined in the Levitical code. Upon the whole, then, the phrase "an holy convocation" is of very doubtful interpretation, yet it is the only one which *seems* to sanction the practice of sabbatical public worship; and, as it cannot be supposed that the Deity, if he had intended to enjoin such a practice among the Israelites, would have done it in ambiguous terms, it may safely be concluded, that they were left at liberty by the Mosaic law as to the mode by which they were *individually*— to sanctify the sabbath. So much for the rites and ceremonies peculiar to the Jewish sabbath, it still remains to investigate the peculiar object of its appointment.

III. The object in appointing the sabbath to be kept by the people of Israel was unquestionably the furtherance of the end, which the providence of God had in view in selecting them for his peculiar people. Like all the other statutes, and ordinances enjoined under the Mosaic dispensation, it was a means of securing those principles of true religion, the preservation of which was the design of the Almighty in making them the depository of his revealed will. So much may be inferred from the circumstance of its being a divine ordination, though it may not be easy to

discover the particular way in which that purpose was effected. Our conviction of the wisdom and goodness of the divine administration should not be shaken by our ignorance as to the precise mode of its operation. In surveying the ways of God to man the human understanding marches with the confidence of security to a certain limit, beyond which it feebly gropes its way, till it is lost in the mysteriousness of unfathomable immensity. We see enough, however, to convince us that they are in design beneficent, in execution all-wise; and, while impressed with a humbling sense of our littleness and imperfection, we learn to confide in the wisdom and benignity of the great First Cause. From the fitness and mercy of the divine dispensations with which we are acquainted, it is just to infer the same fitness and mercy in such as come not within the sphere of our limited vision. If reason, confined as it is, can trace many benefits resulting from the ordinances of Revelation, it cannot be doubted, considering the nature of him from whom they proceed, that there are many more benefits which escape observation. Without presuming, then, to discover *every* object of the sabbatical institution under the law, there are some to the knowledge of which we are led by the unerring guidance of the holy Scripture.

From various passages of the sacred writings

it appears that the sabbath was in part designed to afford a weekly rest and refreshment from the toil of worldly occupations. "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed[n]." Of this rest not only servants and labourers, but beasts of burden were to partake: a wise and merciful law, which extended the repose so needful for man to the brute animals subjected to his domination. Being also appointed to be kept holy to the Lord, it afforded a frequent opportunity for sacred meditation, and for such pious exercises as administer to the spiritual welfare of the soul. Time was thus allowed for the performance of many rites and ceremonies and obligations enjoined in the Levitical law. All the circumstances attending the celebration of that day were adapted to awaken the devout feelings of the heart, and to fix their minds upon the one true God in the peculiar relationship of king and governor of Israel. On every account the influence of the sabbath must have been no less advantageous than powerful; so that without such a regular monition a people prone to idolatry and to revolt from God could scarcely have

[n] Exod. xxiii. 12.

been retained in obedience to the divine commands.

Much as it contributed to the support of religion in general, it was specially designed to keep in memory the creation of all things by Jehovah Elohim. This is the specific reason assigned for its adoption into the Mosaic polity. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it[o]." Great must have been the efficacy of this ordinance in restraining the Israelites from idol-worship, the besetting sin of that stubborn people. Being instituted in memory of the work of creation, every act of compliance with the command was a virtual acknowledgment of the one Jehovah, in opposition to the numerous false deities of surrounding nations. The remission of their worldly employments on the seventh day naturally called to remembrance God's creating the world in six days, and resting on the seventh. In the constant renewal of this recollection, their minds must have been as constantly impressed with the first and fundamental truth of all religion, the unity and omnipotence of the Deity. With every returning sabbath their thoughts were directed to the Supreme Be-

[o] Exod. xx. 11. So Exod. xxxi. 17.

ing, who, existing eternally, infinite in his perfections, and the Creator of the universe, was alone deserving their praise, their reverence and worship.

As such a memorial the sabbath is of equal utility to all mankind, and will continue so to the latest posterities; but it was likewise in an especial manner useful to the Jews as commemorative of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In the repetition of the Sinaitic law in the book of Deuteronomy this is declared to be one object of its institution: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day[p]." Amid the enjoyment of the rest allowed on the seventh day, the Israelites were reminded of the gratitude due to the Lord their God, who had "redeemed them out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." It is the opinion of some that the Jewish sabbath was celebrated on the very day of the week on which God completed the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the red sea[q]; but, though such

[p] Deut. v. 15.

[q] Mede, *Discourse* XV. The reason for the institution of the sabbath assigned Exod. xx. 11. and Deut. v. 15. are perfectly reconcileable, as must be evident upon the least consideration.

calculations are probably too obscure to be depended upon, it was a manifest commemoration of their escape from the most severe slavery, through the mercies of God, and the frequent exertion of miraculous power. Reflection upon these events, so interesting to the Hebrew race, would bring to their remembrance the mighty works which had been wrought for them by Jehovah, how he led them by an outstretched arm, shewed them signs and wonders, and was for ever kind and long-suffering to a rebellious people. The thought of these things would excite sentiments of grateful piety to the God of their fathers, and as the sabbath commemorated their deliverance from the bonds of Pharaoh, they would naturally, in celebrating it, profess themselves the servants of Jehovah in the peculiar relation of Deliverer, and feel their obligation strengthened to obey his laws.

That the sabbath was instituted partly with the view of being a SIGN is asserted by the inspired writers: "The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a

Some suppose that in Deuteronomy God does not give the reason for the sanctification of the seventh day, but the reason why servants and labourers should have a rest as well as their masters. Boothroyd and others *in loc.* But see Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satanæ*, p. 560—564.

sign between me and the children of Israel for ever[r]." As the original word, here rendered "sign," has various significations, the expression is not without ambiguity; but it seems, in this place, to denote that which distinguishes one thing from another, that which is a mark of distinction, or that by which any thing is known[s]. According to this signification of the term, the sabbath was a sign, or *symbolum*, whereby it was attested that Jehovah was the only God whom the Israelites worshipped, and that they were his peculiar people. In this manner it is explained by the most able commentators, and Mede, Spencer, and others have pointed out the way in which it was a sign between Jehovah and the people of Israel. Though undoubtedly a sign, it was so only in common with the other rites and ceremonies of the Levitical law, all of which were the distinguishing marks of that dispensation. Hence when the sabbath is so described it is usually mentioned in the plural, with an evident intention to include all the other festivals and holy days, which were equally signs under the Mosaic economy[t].

[r] Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. See Le Clerc *in loc.*

[s] See the Hebrew Lexicons, especially Taylor's *Concordance* in אות.

[t] As for instance Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12, 20. That this forms no objection to its primeval institution has been shewn before, chap. ii. p. 45.

The Jewish sabbath being in some respects ceremonial, has been considered as having a typical meaning, and it derives a degree of probability from the general typical nature of the Mosaic ordinances. A type must have been originally *designed* to be so, of which there can be no indubitable evidence except the declaration of an inspired writer; no symbolical design, therefore, ought to be attributed to the sabbath without the authority of the sacred Scriptures. If examined by this test, some notions which have been current respecting the typical nature of the sabbath will be found to be perfectly gratuitous, and wholly devoid of scriptural foundation. Thus some have imagined it to be a prefiguration of the rest of the body of our Lord in the grave, in which it lay during the whole Jewish sabbath, as also part of the sixth day, and part of the first. Some think that, in respect of the peculiar sacrifices annexed to it, it was typical of the sacrifice of Christ. Some regard it as a type of the spiritual rest which the righteous should enjoy under the Gospel by resting from the burthensome rites and ceremonies of the law; while others consider it a figure or representation of that spiritual ceasing from the works of sin, which Christians should aim at under the law of grace. That the sabbath was *designed* to be typical in any of these respects no intimation is supplied by the sacred writers; these notions, therefore, must be num-

bered among those resemblances and analogies, which a fertile imagination can easily discover, but which, having no support in the declarations of Scripture, must be discarded with all other idle dreams of fancy.

Again it has been contended that the sabbath is typical of the everlasting rest which the faithful shall enjoy in heaven; and for proof appeal has been made to the discourse of the Apostle in the fourth chapter of Hebrews. This passage, it must be owned, is not without considerable difficulties, and no conclusion can perhaps be drawn from it without *some* hesitation: nevertheless, there does appear to be no very slender grounds for asserting, on the authority of this passage, that the sabbath had a mystical meaning, and that it was typical of a heavenly rest. These grounds need not now be stated, as this subject will come again under consideration in a subsequent part of this work [u].

[u] On the typical character of the sabbath. See Mather, *On the Types of the Old Testament*, p. 445.; Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ*, P. 2. § 21.; Owen, *Exercit.* iii. § 56.; Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. v. sect. 6.; Edwards, *Theol. Reformata*, vol. ii. p. 444.; Bishop White, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, p. 163.; Burnet, *Lett. 2da* annexed to his *Archæologiæ;* Deylingius, *Obs. Sacræ.* P. v. Diss. 32. § 9. Diss. 33. § 4.; Witsius, *Æconom. Fœderis*, lib. i. cap. vii. § 13.; Lightfoot, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 1320. et seq.; Buxtorf, *Syn. Jud.* p. 331. and *Florileg. Heb.* p. 299.; Whitby, Abresch and Wetstein on Heb. iv. 9. and A. Clarke on Exod. xx. 10. and Col. ii. 16.

SECTION II.

Inquiry whether the Sabbatical Institution was to survive, or to be abrogated with, Judaism.

HAVING now investigated the peculiarities of the Jewish sabbath, our attention must now be directed to the important question, whether it was to be abolished along with the peculiar rites of Judaism. It is often argued that the sabbath, having been incorporated by divine command among the laws of Moses, necessarily ceased with the extinction of that polity. The argument is specious, and is, in fact, the palladium of the anti-sabbatarian cause. A strong impression was once made by it upon the author of these pages, at an earlier period of his life; and, as it is calculated to have a similar influence upon the minds of others, it deserves a serious consideration.

That the Hebrew ritual, with its typical rites and emblematical ordinances, was superseded by the introduction of Christianity, is a truth which

no believer in the divine mission of our Lord will dispute; and the obligation of the sabbath so far as it was *peculiar* to that ritual, must have ceased. It was declared in the law, that "the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS, for a perpetual covenant;" that is, I conceive, so long as their state and constitution should endure [a]; and St. Paul pronounced it to be abolished among the other ceremonial institutions of the Mosaic economy [b]. The cessation of the Jewish sabbath is unequivocally allowed; but it does not follow from this admission, that Christians are released from the duty of keeping the sabbatical ordinance according to its original appointment. Though its peculiar observance expired with the peculiar polity to which it belonged, in its essential nature and spirit it may still be binding upon all mankind. The repeal of the Levitical rites accompanying the sabbath does not necessarily involve the sanctity of the seventh day; since that which is essential to an

[a] Exod. xxxi. 16.

[b] Rom. xiv. 5, 6. Gal. iv. 10. Col. ii. 16, 17 [c].

[c] "Mullus Apostoli sermo est vel per epistolam, vel presentis, in quo non laboret docere antiquæ legis onera deposita, et omnia illa quæ in typis et imaginibus præcesserunt, i. e. otium Sabbati, &c. gratia Evangelii subrepente, cessasse." Jerome, *Præfat. in Ep. ad Galat.* Vol. iv. p. 222.

institution may remain, while adventitious appendages may be abrogated. Whether this is the case with the sabbath must finally be determined by the Christian Scriptures; yet some considerations, independently of their infallible authority, and derived solely from the Jewish Scriptures evince, that it was not to be annulled along with the Levitical ordinances.

The appointment of the sabbath has been shown before, to be coeval with the world, addressed to all mankind, and consequently obligatory upon the whole human race. It was received into the Levitical code with certain modifications, a circumstance by no means converting it into a mere Jewish festival, binding only upon the Hebrew nation. The relation in which it stood to all mankind from its aboriginal institution cannot be altered by its adoption into the religious polity of a particular people; for, though it was adopted by the direction of the Deity, it does not thereby lose the character of universality which he had antecedently given to it. Deriving no part of its sanctity from the Mosaic Law, it is no more cancelled by the abrogation of that polity, than the injunction to practise the moral duties. The obligation of the sabbath, as the prohibition to abstain from adultery, murder, theft, and other crimes, is independent of the Jewish dispensation, with the dissolution of which

it cannot therefore be affected. It is an institution of divine origin, of an earlier age, of universal interest, and, while the peculiar observance of it established by the law of Moses has expired, will remain in force to the latest generations.

If the sabbatical command was given at the creation, it would not be disobeyed, it may be presumed, in the antediluvian ages by the pious Sethites, nor subsequently by the faithful line of Abraham; it, therefore, formed a part of the ritual religion of the patriarchs. Now "the worship of the Christian church is properly to be considered as a restoration of the patriarchal, in its primitive simplicity and purity;—and of the patriarchal worship, the sabbath was the noblest and perhaps the simplest rite[d]." If it be objected to this argument, that it would equally go to prove the obligation of sacrifices in the Christian church, the answer is, that the ancient sacrifices were typical, as the holy Eucharist is commemorative of the great mediatorial sacrifice of Christ. They had respect to one and the same object. An emblematical representation is of no further use, when that which it prefigured has actually come to pass. As Christ has once offered himself for all, the rites typical of that event must needs give place to those which are

[d] Bishop Horsley, *Sermon*, xxii. vol. ii. p. 201.

commemorative. But the sabbath cannot be proved to be a type of any gospel blessing on earth, and must therefore continue under the covenant of grace, as must the memorial of that which the sacrifices represented.

The patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations have each something peculiar, something which distinguishes it from the rest, while at the same time they have a mutual relationship. With many distinctive features they have many things in common. They are all founded in the same system of divine grace, which, commencing with the fall, was successively developed, till it shone with its most resplendent lustre at the advent of our Redeemer. They promulgate the same truth, though with different degrees of clearness; and they conspire with wonderful harmony and accordance in announcing to man the grand scheme of redemption through a Mediator. Christ is the mighty Deliverer promised to the Patriarchs, typified in the law, and described in the gospel; he, like the sun in the solar system, is the orb about which they revolve, and for the manifestation of whom they were designed in the deep counsels of omnipotence. From first to last the incarnate God is the subject of their proclamation; and under every religious institution the Almighty has been progressively carrying on a stupendous plan of grace and

mercy for the salvation of his fallen creatures. Amid the harmony of these dispensations, a harmony we must admire and revere, not the least striking is their accordance in a septenary day of public worship.

The sabbath, moreover, is distinguished above the other holy-days of the Jews by some circumstances so remarkable as can only be accounted for on the supposition that it was designed to survive the rest. Of all the Jewish festivals it alone dates its origin with that of the world, being appointed during the state of man's innocency, and for the only human beings then in existence, which seems to mark it out for universal reception. Marriage, another paradisiacal institution, an institution not more conducive to the multiplication than to the virtue and happiness of the human race, is plainly designed to last till the consummation of all things; and why should the sanctity of the sabbath, which is as necessary for the religious improvement, as marriage for the comfort of man, be thought of more limited continuance? Of all the Jewish festivals it alone was blessed and sanctified by the immediate agency of the Deity. The rest were appointed by the instrumentality of his servant Moses, through whom they are commanded to be hallowed by the children of Israel; but the sabbath was sanctified by the act of God himself, primarily,

when he surveyed with benign complacency the work of the six demiurgic days, and subsequently, when the glory of the Lord was displayed with awful and tremendous majesty from the Arabian mount. Why this distinction if the sabbath was to perish with the ceremonial ordinances of the Law? Was the peculiar eminence attached to it by these circumstances without design, and for no purpose? Impossible. In the divine operations there is nothing superfluous or unmeaning, no display of useless power and grandeur; for what purpose, then, could the seventh day be distinguished in so remarkable a manner above all other days, unless to designate it as a perpetual ordinance? In short, every thing respecting the institution is inexplicable on the supposition that it was to be annulled with the Hebrew ritual.

In the fourth commandment the sabbath is declared to be a commemoration of the wisdom and goodness of God in creating the universe in six days, and resting on the seventh; and, as all mankind are bound to reverence the divine perfections manifested in the work of creation, all mankind, as it should seem, are likewise bound to observe an institution appointed by the Deity for its commemoration. If it had not been designed to be of lasting obligation, why was a reason given for its institution which renders it

equally incumbent upon every individual of all nations, and of all ages? Other festivals were especial signs between Jehovah and the Israelites, instituted in memory of some special kindness of Providence vouchsafed to them, or to adumbrate some future expected blessing; but the sabbath cannot be proved to typify or prefigure any thing under the gospel dispensation: if it is a mystic representation of any thing future, it is of the beatified rest in heaven, and in that way it is co-existent with the human species. The pious Jew reading in the Law, that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; WHEREFORE the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it[e]," must have concluded, that, as the reason here alleged for the appointment of the sabbath equally applies to all men, all are bound to receive it who are taught that the universe was created by the fiat of Jehovah Elohim.

Again, in the fourth commandment "the strangers that were within their gates," were enjoined to observe the sabbath, which implies that it was something more than a mere Jewish festival. No "stranger" was permitted to eat the Passover without being initiated into the religion of Moses by the rite of circumcision[f],

[e] Exod. xx. 11. [f] Ibid. xii. 43, 44.

nor was he allowed to offer incense, or to join in any of the ritual services of the Law, unless he submitted to be circumcised[g]; but, without such initiation, he was obliged to keep the sabbatical rest; of which no other account can rationally be given, than that the former were rites peculiar to Judaism, while the latter was also designed for universal and perpetual observance. This receives much confirmation from the other injunctions extended to the "strangers" in Judea, which are of a moral nature. Thus they were commanded to abstain from idolatry, and to worship the true God[h], and they were not to blaspheme his holy name[i]. As these are injunctions permanently binding upon mankind, it must reasonably be supposed, that the command of the sabbath is of the same description.

An express declaration that the Jewish polity was to be abrogated, and a new one to be substituted in its stead, would have defeated the design of that dispensation, and of course is not to be expected; nevertheless it is intimated, and in no very obscure terms, that the sabbath was to have a place in the new and spiritual covenant. Thus Isaiah, "The sons of the stranger that join themselves unto the Lord, to serve him, and to love

[g] Gen. xvii. 10. et seq. Josh. v. 2, et seq.

[h] Exod. xxii. 20.

[i] Levit. xxiv. 16.

the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant: even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar: for mine house shall be called the house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him[k]" Some refer this prophecy to the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, but Vitringa, and other able commentators, to the gospel dispensation; and with good reason, for, in embracing Christianity, "the sons of the stranger had joined themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants," "they kept the sabbath from polluting it," "they had taken hold of his covenant," they had been brought to God's holy mountain, that is the church, of which mount Zion was the type[l], "they were made joyful in his house of prayer," "their spiritual burnt-offerings and sacrifices were accepted upon his altar," Christ, which is the true propitiatory[m],

[k] Isa. lvi. 6—8.

[l] Ibid. ii. 2.—xi. 9. Ezek. xx. 40.

[m] Rom. iii. 25.

" his house had been called a house of prayer for all people," and the Lord God had gathered unto Christ others than " the outcasts of Israel." The prediction therefore is completely fulfilled in the Christian dispensation, under which, it is declared in the prophecy, that the sabbath should continue a divine institution, and that those who keep from polluting it, taking hold of the new covenant, shall be made joyful in the church, which is the house of prayer for all people.

The house of God was never " the house of prayer for all people," till the Gentiles, under the gospel dispensation, were admitted to all the privileges of grace; and under this dispensation the sabbath was not only to continue, but a special blessing is annexed to the observance of it. This interpretation is supported by a commentator whose sceptical notions on some important articles render his authority less suspicious where he agrees with the orthodox. " As the persons here intended, says he, are not proselytes to the Jewish religion, but mere Gentiles, who were under no obligation to observe any part of the Mosaic Law, as such, and yet are considered as highly commendable for keeping the sabbath, it seems to me that a strong argument may hence be drawn in support of the opinion, that the sabbath was instituted by God at the beginning of the world, and that it was obligatory on all

men to whom that institution was made known. The promise in Isaiah is not confined to persons who might be desirous of living among the Jews, but extends to all strangers in any part of the world, who, not being proselytes to the Jewish religion, might be induced to forsake idolatry, and to observe the sabbath[n]."

In another place Isaiah says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy-day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it[o]." This passage has primarily so evident a reference to the Jewish sabbath, that I have not scrupled so to apply it in the preceding section. But when it is considered that the Evangelical prophet is continually extending his view to the future kingdom of grace, that in these latter parts of his predictions he refers more particularly to the blessings of the gospel dispensation, and that he had a

[n] Dodson, *Translation of Isaiah*, note in loc. See also Dwight, *Theology*, Serm. 105.

[o] Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

little before, in the sixty-fifth chapter, referred to the Christian sabbath, it is highly probable that he here treats of the Jewish, with allusion to the Christian festival. "Perhaps, says Bp. Jebb, in no other passage are its duties, its enjoyments, and its rewards, so happily described, as in the text. The prophet writes, no less for Christians, than for Jews. He looks beyond a cold formality of ritual obedience, to the enlarged and free spirit of rational devotion. With him the sabbath breathes, as it ever ought to breathe, the cheerful animation of a festival [p]."

Again, Isaiah says; "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord [q]." The chapter from which this is extracted, together with the preceding one, manifestly relate, as Bishop Lowth observes, to the calling of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Christian dispensation, the reprobation of the apostate Jews, and their destruction by the Romans. The application to the times of the gospel is so extremely

[p] Bp. Jebb, *Sermons* on Isa. lviii. 13, 14. p. 140.

[q] Isa. lxvi. 22, 23.

evident, that those who are apt to be somewhat sceptical in the interpretation of prophecy have not denied it, as Grotius, Le Clerc, and Dathe. In the prophetical description of the new economy it is declared, that all flesh should worship the Lord, "from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another;" that is, as many understand it, believers should offer up their public devotions, not only every month, but on every sabbath day. It must be allowed however, that the expressions may only be intended to signify generally, that public worship should be offered to the Deity, under the new economy, at the seasons appointed for it, without determining what those seasons should be [r].

The same doubt attaches to a passage in Ezekiel wherein mention is made of the sabbath, "Likewise the people of the Lord shall worship

[r] "Omnis generis gentisque homines venient oraturi in subdiali Gentium: idque non tantum fiet singulis mensibus, sed quâque hebdomade." Grotius *in loc.* Another eminent commentator says on the other hand. "Sensus simplex; conditorum perfectorumque Cœlorum novorum ac Terræ novæ consequens fore, ut tandem omnes per orbem homines, vera religione agnita, ingente zelo *statis temporibus* Deum publice colant ac venerabundi celebrent atque adorent, et quidem ritu spirituali." Vitringa *in loc.* A little after he says "Si sub nomine sabbati hic non tantum *hebdomadalia*, verum etiam *omnia sabbata* intelligantur; quod in medio relinquo; sufficit mihi, *hebdomadalia* non excludi."

at the door of this gate before the Lord, in the sabbaths, and in the new moons. And the burnt-offerings that the prince shall offer unto the Lord in the sabbath day, shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish [s]." This description occurs in Ezekiel's grand but mysterious vision of a new temple and city, under which is represented the establishment of the universal church of Christ, and the prophet gives a particular direction concerning the service of the sabbath day in the new spiritual state. But whether it is meant that the sabbath should be continued under the new religion and polity, or merely that sacred offices should be performed at stated times, it is not easy to decide. While the general duty of public worship in the future economy is evidently set forth, we cannot but hesitate in inferring the particular manner of its performance from a description so highly parabolical, and abounding with such obscure imagery.

The perpetuity of the sabbath has been argued from the language of the psalmist; "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord; this gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee; for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the build-

[s] Ezek. xlvi. 3, 4.

ers refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it[t]." That this passage is prophetical of Christ is acknowledged by the generality of divines, for it is expressly referred to him in the New Testament[u], but that "the day which the Lord hath made," relates to the Christian observance of the sabbath is a position not so easily defined. By various commentators it is variously explained[x]; but it is most commonly understood of the day on which Christ rose from the dead. Bp. Horsley seems to take it for the day of the resurrection, for he explains this and the cxviith psalm of the angelic host attending round the throne of God in heaven, with Messiah the conqueror in his train, the redeemed. In this, as in several instances of his posthumous notes in the psalms, he is probably more fanciful than just; but whatever may be intended by the expression, it must be allowed to be somewhat ambiguous, and it would there-

[t] Ps. cxviii. 19—24.

[u] Matt. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10. Luke xx. 17. Acts iv. 11. Ephes. ii. 20. 1 Peter ii. 4.

[x] Michaelis, *Notæ Uberiores in Hagiographos*, in loc.; Poli *Synop.* in loc. Dwight strenuously urges it in favour of the perpetuity of the sabbath, but his reasoning is glaringly weak: no unusual thing with that writer.

fore be injudicious to found an argument on it in reference to the present question.

Discarding testimony of so dubious a character, we may rely upon the before-cited passages from Isaiah, the first of which clearly, and the other two most probably, predict the continuance of the sabbath under the gospel dispensation. They are not, however, to be received as isolated passages, having no mutual bearing and relationship: they reflect light and strength upon each other: and any one of them being proved to foretel that the sabbath was to continue under the dispensation of grace, confirms, in no trifling degree, the same interpretation of the others. Considered in their combined evidence and force, no rational doubt can remain that, agreeably to the predictions of the evangelical prophet, the sabbath was an institution designed to last to the termination of this sublunary scene.

To the inquiry which has formed the subject of this section, whether the sabbath was to survive, or to be abrogated with Judaism, a satisfactory answer may now be returned. For let the conclusions which have been already established be recapitulated, and candidly considered. It has been proved in the former part of this work; that the sanctity of the seventh day, was originally declared by the Almighty upon finishing the work of creation, and that the command

was addressed to the whole human race. In the present chapter it has been shewn, that, notwithstanding its being adopted into the Hebrew ritual with some peculiar rites and observances, which have been briefly described, it did not thereby become a mere Jewish festival; that, while these rites and observances were necessarily abrogated along with the polity of which they constituted a part, all that is essential to the sabbatical institution survived; that its sanctity, being anterior to, and independent of the law, did not cease with Judaism; that several circumstances in regard to the sabbath, even under the Mosaic economy, designated it for a perpetual ordinance; and that there are express intimations in the Old Testament that the sabbath was to be revived under the new covenant which the Lord God would establish in the latter days. So far, then, from being annulled by the dissolution of the Levitical law, it received additional sanction from its adoption into that law.

Thus in tracing the history of the sabbath, through the period of the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, the sanctification of it at the creation has not been abrogated by any declaration in the inspired records of the Old Testament; and as a divine command must continue in force for ever, unless repealed by the same authority by which it was promulged, the sabbatical law

remains still incumbent upon all mankind unless it be repealed in the Christian Scriptures, to the authority of which we bow with submissive reverence. Our next inquiry, therefore, is, whether any, and what alteration has been made in it by our blessed Lord, and his Apostles.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SABBATICAL INSTITUTION UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

SECT. I.

The sabbatical institution, so far from being abrogated, is enjoined in the New Testament.

By the preceding investigation the way is prepared for the most important inquiry into the nature and obligation of the sabbath under the gospel dispensation. Whatever law concerning it may have been promulged to the patriarchs or Israelites, if annulled by the authority of our Saviour, it is no longer binding upon Christians. The question then of highest interest is, whether it be repealed in the sacred records of Christianity, for upon its decision our duties in regard to the ordinance under consideration must depend.

Those who deny the religious obligation of the sabbath, confidently affirm that it is abolished by apostolical authority; in proof of which appeal

has been made to a few texts of the apostolical epistles. Of these the first and most imposing is the injunction of St. Paul: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ[a]." From this passage Dr. Paley, and a multitude of other writers, conclude that the sanctification of the seventh day is dispensed with in the Christian church. In dissenting from this conclusion, however, I readily concede that, though by using the plural number the apostle evidently refers to all the days of sacred rest appointed in the law, the Jewish weekly sabbath is included, which consequently is declared, in plain and explicit language, to be abolished with the carnal ordinances of the Jewish religion. "But, as Dr. Priestley remarks, this does not imply that we should observe no day at all, as a season of rest from worldly business, and for the purpose of religious improvement, but only such a sabbath as the Jews, and especially the more superstitious of them, observed, with respect to which our Saviour was frequently reproving them. Such superstitious observances were probably retained by the Judaizing Gnostics, and they are retained by the

[a] Col. ii. 16, 17.

bulk of the Jewish nation until this day. The Gentiles also were under no obligation to observe a seventh day for the purpose of rest, as the Jews were; but as the apostles had always been used to offices of public worship one day in seven, and the propriety and use of the custom was never questioned, it cannot be supposed that they would voluntarily abandon so useful an institution, or that they would not recommend it to their disciples[b]."

Though the last sentence is perhaps objectionable, as seeming to exclude the agency of the Spirit in the apostolical directions, the passage, coming from so keen and sceptical a writer, is a valuable acknowledgment. That the apostle refers solely to the Levitical ordinances is plain from the whole scope of the chapter, and from the circumstance, that the seventh day festival of the Christians was not called "the sabbath," but "the Lord's day." These appellations were never confounded in the apostolic age, and in speaking of the former, no one would ever suppose that the latter was included. The sabbath days, then, to which St. Paul alludes, were not the Sundays of the Christian worship, but the Saturdays and other feasts of the Jewish calendar. The same

[b] *Notes on all the Books of Scripture*, in loc. See Danzius, *De Festo Septiman. abrogato*, apud Meuschen, *Nov. Test. ex Talmud-illustrat.*

inference results from the very phraseology used by him; for, extending the prohibition against judging others "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon," he can only refer to the Mosaic statutes relating to these matters; and it would be as unreasonable to suppose that the Christian sabbath was prohibited by the mention of the "sabbath days," as that the use of bread and wine in the eucharist was condemned by the expressions "in meat, or in drink."

In this part of his epistle the apostle is guarding the Colossians against the errors and superstitions which Judaizing and corrupt men were endeavouring to ingraft upon the simplicity of the Gospel. He admonishes the converts of their freedom from the ceremonies of the Jews, their circumcision, their distinction of meats, their new moons, their holy days; all which were obscure adumbrations of "things to come," of spiritual blessings in the church, which is the body of Christ, and now perfectly useless to those who enjoy the reality of what they were only the shadows. The sabbath, in being incorporated with the Levitical rites, received a peculiar and especial object, together with peculiar ceremonies and laws for its celebration; and, so far as it was peculiarly Judaic, it is abolished in Christ. Its penal sanction, its rigorous rest, its appropriation

as a sign, in short, all that accommodated it to the Hebrew church, is done away; but there is no reference to the Paradisiacal institution of the sabbath. The primæval command is not implicated in the apostle's declaration; it is to the Jewish sabbath alone to which he refers; and while the festivals of that religion are pronounced to be transient shadows, the original institution, which is not even glanced at by the apostle, must remain in full force.

These observations are for the most part applicable to the other texts adduced in opposition to the permanency of the sabbatical institution, namely, Rom. xiv. 5, 6. and Gal. iv. 10, 11. in the former of which the apostle says; "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." Here St. Paul is speaking of the Levitical festivals, the new moons, the sabbaths, and other holy days, for which the Jewish converts naturally entertained a regard, while the Gentile believers as naturally deemed them entitled to no respect. This was the subject of controversy, and the apostle exhorts every one to be firmly persuaded in his own mind, and, while differing in practice, to exercise mutual charity and forbearance. In

the other passage above referred to, he says to the Galatians, " Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." He alludes to the weekly sabbaths, the new moons, the festivals, and the sabbatical and Jubilee years of the Jews, the observance of which the apostle delicately condemns, in expressing his fears lest, after all his labour, the Galatians did not understand the liberty and privileges of the gospel. That in both these passages St. Paul is speaking of the Jewish festivals must be evident upon a bare perusal of the context, and it is acknowledged and illustrated by almost every commentator; his decision, therefore, respecting the Mosaic holy days cannot be extended to the Paradisiacal and Christian sabbaths.

From this review of the texts in the New Testament, which have been appealed to by our adversaries, it may be confidently asserted that the sanctity of the seventh day has not been abrogated either by Christ or his apostles. But there is another objection derived rather from the spirit of the gospel than any express declaration, and as it is not unfrequently made, even by writers of the first respectability, it would be improper to pass it over without remark. The objection is, that positive institutions of religion have no inherent excellence; that they only make a part of

the discipline by which creatures in their first state of imperfection, weak in intellect, and strong in passion, must be trained to the habit of those virtues which are in themselves valuable; that they are but a secondary part of the will of God, and must be considered to be of secondary rank as branches of man's obedience; that they are no otherwise pleasing to God, than as they are beneficial to man by enlivening the flame of genuine religion in his bosom; and that, while the primary duties of religion are the very end for which man was originally created, and, after the ruin of the fall, redeemed, the positive precepts are only the means appointed to facilitate and secure the attainment of the end. The sabbath, therefore, being merely a positive and ceremonial institution, cannot be of universal application, nor be placed upon the same footing with a moral duty.

Such is the objection, and, notwithstanding the eminent names by which it is urged, I am of opinion that it contains more of subtilty than solidity. The distinction between moral and positive laws is in many cases very difficult to be defined. A moral law, having its foundation in right reason, and the eternal fitness of things, is obligatory upon the consciences of all intelligent creatures; positive laws, on the other hand, have no fitness or authority antecedently to their promulgation, and, independently of such promulgation, are in

their own nature indifferent. The former is universally assented to by unsophisticated reason, and is necessarily, and for ever binding; while the latter, not originating in any dictate of conscience, has no importance beyond what it receives from the will of him by whom it is prescribed. But they sometimes approximate so near, that it is no easy matter to distinguish their limits. In what class, for instance, are we to number the laws respecting marriage within certain degrees of kindred, the law of divorces, the ordinance of the sacraments, and many others? These are consentaneous to the eternal principles of morality, and yet they are in some degree of a positive nature. They participate, to a certain extent, of both; and hence a precept may be said to be moral in a secondary or inferior sense, when it is naturally suitable to advance that which is moral in the highest sense. Of this mixed character is the sabbath in the opinion of perhaps the greater part of those who have treated the subject, who allow it to be agreeable to eternal reason, that some portion of time should be devoted by all intelligent creatures to the service of God, while they can discover no reason in the nature of things why it should be the seventh, rather than the sixth, or any other day.

But this representation, notwithstanding its plausibility, cannot claim unqualified assent. If

it be right and fit to commemorate the creation of the world in six days, and the cessation of that sublime work on the seventh, it is right and fit to select such a revolution of days as may be suitable for this purpose. The acknowledgment of the production of the universe out of nothing is so connected with the belief of a great First Cause, that it is indisputably the duty of all men to commemorate that glorious operation of Omnipotent Wisdom; but agreeably to the light we enjoy from Revelation; a septenary revolution alone is commemorative of its completion in six days, which authorizes the adoption of every seventh day rather than any other cycle [c].

Yet, allowing the sabbatical law to be in certain respects ceremonial, it evidently accords, in some particulars, with the light of reason and nature. That some part of our time should be

[c] Against the opinion that the sabbath is a positive institution, it has been alleged, "that the ceremonial law" in all the parts of it was contrived on account of sin, and to point to a Saviour; but in a state of innocence there could be no use for such shadows and ceremonies. Therefore we must conclude, that a law which was to be observed, though man had never apostatized from God; and which stood in full force, from the very creation of the world; cannot be made a part of that ceremonial law which was contrived for a state of sin, and was given 2500 years after." (Wright's *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. i. § 4.) But I own this appears to me very like a begging of the question; it certainly assumes what is not, and cannot, be proved.

devoted to the service of the Deity, is a duty demanded by the relation of creatures to their Creator, and recognized by the moral feelings implanted in the human breast. The law which enjoins a duty discoverable without the aid of revelation, must have its foundation in the law of nature; it is the echo of the voice of conscience, and universally binding, because founded in reason, and the eternal fitness of things. Of this kind is the law of the sabbath, since it enjoins the stated worship of God, a duty to which every virtuous bosom is naturally impelled, and of which every generous mind acknowledges the propriety. To the performance of this duty it is plain that fixed seasons are absolutely necessary, and so far it is a moral dictate, though it belongs to God alone to determine, by a positive enactment, the stated periods of its return. A mere ceremonial act, likewise, has no natural connection with religious feelings, it is arbitrary in its nature, and influential only by institution; but the appropriation of a portion of our time to the praise and veneration of the Deity is linked with the noblest virtues, is interwoven with all the sentiments of ardent piety, and, antecedently to any revealed knowledge, is felt to be an enduring and sacred obligation. But it is sufficient to rebut the objection, if the sabbatical command be deemed partly moral, and partly

positive; for in whatever degree it is moral, it becomes so far imperative upon the conscience.

The law of the sabbath, then, is not a mere positive precept; but Bishop Horsley urges, that our Saviour's declaration, "that the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath[d]," establishes, in the most peremptory terms the distinction between natural duties and positive institutions, and determines the sabbath to be of the latter description[e]. These positions he labours at great length to substantiate; but the whole of his reasoning proceeds upon a misconception of our Lord's words, which have no reference to the distinction between moral laws and positive ordinances. They form part of his reply to the charge against his disciples for doing what was not lawful on the sabbath day, and they amount to this, that, inasmuch as the sabbath was made for the use of man, it cannot be profaned by doing what contributes to the benefit of man. Our Saviour retorts upon the Pharisees that, by their traditions and superstitious observances, they had so far perverted a law of God as to deprive it of some advantages it was intended to confer. The sabbath was designed for the good of man, as is the moral law ingrafted in his heart, and

[d] Mark ii. 27.

[e] Bp. Horsley, *Sermon* 21.

whatever opposes this object is equally culpable in the one case as in the other. His disciples therefore were not to be condemned for only having done that which was strictly agreeable to the design of all the laws of God, whether moral or ceremonial. Hence the text in question has nothing to do with the distinction between natural and positive laws; and to infer from it that the sabbath belongs to the latter, is just as irrelevant as to conclude that the fifth commandment is a mere positive law, because our Saviour declares that the Pharisees had made it of none effect through their traditions[f].

In the question respecting the perpetual sanctity of the sabbath, too much importance has been attached to the distinction between moral laws and positive institutions. It is a distinction which cannot be always satisfactorily traced; for, amid the clouds, and errors, and prejudices, and weaknesses which obscure our intellectual views, it is often impossible to perceive what is, and what is not consonant with the eternal fitness of things: nor, when it is clearly perceived, is it easy to discriminate how much of it is discoverable by the light of nature, and how much is owing to the effulgence of celestial communication. If, pushing our inquiries farther,

[f] Mark vii. 9—13.

we attempt to trace that which constitutes the immutable distinction of right and wrong in human actions, we shall find no other sure foundation for it than the will of God: in point of moral obligation, therefore, where is the difference whether a duty be discoverable by the light of nature, or of revelation? If the will of God be the sole foundation of moral obligation, all duties, natural and positive, must upon this principle be equally binding upon those to whom that will is made known[g]. In reference, then, to the revealed will of God, and without such reference there can be no argument on Christian conduct, it matters not whether a precept belong to the class of moral or positive laws; for, if it be promulged in the volume of revelation, it is, in either case, equally authoritative. The circumstance of its being commanded by the Almighty gives it validity, which is no way affected whether it were, or were not, antecedently founded in reason and nature; and the injunction of the sabbath, whether it be a moral or ceremonial law, or in part partaking of both, is as binding, pro-

[g] See Ernesti, *Opuscula Theologica*, Diss. 3. It will not follow from this doctrine, that all crimes are equal, as Bp. Horsley supposes; (*Sermon* xxi. p. 184.) for it may be the will of God to attach a greater value and importance to some duties than to others, according to which the violation of them must be more or less criminal.

vided it be clearly published in the Word of God, as the prohibition against murder, theft, or adultery.

The sabbath, then, is not a mere positive institution, nor, if it were, would that circumstance derogate from its perpetual obligation; and, not being annulled as we have seen, by the express declaration of our Lord or his Apostles, the conclusion is inevitable, that it will remain in force as long as the world endures.

This must be deemed a satisfactory answer, supposing we were furnished with no other, to those who allege that the observance of the sabbath is, in the writings of the New Testament, enjoined by no positive authority, and that it cannot, consequently, be of moral or religious obligation. But if the objection were founded in truth, it would be nugatory; for a festival divinely instituted, and never subsequently abrogated, continues obligatory upon all who are made acquainted with it. To assert that, if it were designed for perpetuity, it would be *expressly* authorized in the Christian Scriptures, is to trespass beyond the limits of the human understanding. We have only to inquire whether any dispensation be divine; for, having ascertained that it proceeds from infinite wisdom, our duty is passive and unlimited obedience. Impious is the presumption of prescribing the

time and mode of the communication of the divine commands; these are in the disposal of God's sovereign will; and he alone can absolve his creatures from the duty of complying with whatever he has enjoined. A revealed law, whenever or wherever given, constitutes an eternal obligation, unless dispensed with by some later revelation; for which reason the Paradisiacal law of the sabbath, not having been cancelled by the Christian religion, must remain perpetually binding.

In these observations we are supplied with an answer to two arguments which have been advanced by Dr. Paley. The first is, "If the command by which the sabbath was instituted be binding upon Christians, it must be binding as to the day, the duties, and the penalty; in none of which it is received." In reference to the Jewish sabbath, it is undoubtedly true that it is not *now* binding either as to the day, the duties, or the penalty; but in reference to the original institution, it has been shown to be still binding upon Christians. The other argument is, that "the observance of the sabbath was not one of the articles enjoined by the Apostles, in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, upon them 'which, from among the Gentiles, were turned unto God.'" Granted; but the decree here referred to relates to the ceremonial ordinances of the Law, and the

sabbath as a part of that Law is abolished, whilst its sanctity, not being derived from Judaism, necessarily survives the extinction of that polity. Both these objections apply only against the Jewish sabbath from which Christians, it is freely acknowledged, are released; but they cannot in justice be urged against the weekly festival, which was a divine appointment of a long anterior date, and never afterwards annulled.

The general result of the investigation, so far as it has proceeded, is, that THE LAW OF THE SABBATH PROMULGATED BY THE ALMIGHTY AT THE TERMINATION OF HIS DEMIURGIC LABOURS, HAS NOT BEEN REPEALED BY ANY SUBSEQUENT REVELATION, AND, THEREFORE, REMAINS BINDING UPON EVERY HUMAN BEING TO WHOM IT IS COMMUNICATED. Resting in this conclusion, which has acquired additional accessions of strength in every stage of our progress, we may consider the permanent obligation of keeping the seventh day holy as completely established. Nothing further is, strictly speaking, required; yet there is still a reserve of evidence conspiring to the same result, and, if possible, still more decisive. Hitherto the appeal to the Christian Scriptures has been rather negative than affirmative, but it shall now be our pleasing office to shew that they unequivocally sanction the appointment of a septenary day dedicated to the service of God.

In the foremost rank of this reserve stands the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, originally written on two tables of stone by the finger of God, and still divided into two tables, both by Jews and Christians, the one comprehending, according to the opinion of Protestants, the first four commandments which relate to our duty to God, and the other, the remaining six which comprise our duty to man. This division has not been universally adopted [h], but it does not

[h] That there are Two Tables and Ten Commandments is generally agreed; but as to the division of these Commandments, and which belong to each Table, there is a diversity of opinion. Some of the Rabbins place five in each Table, but they are usually distributed as above, in the text. Again, the Commandments are differently divided. Thus Jerome (*Comment. in Hoseam*, cap. 10.) makes what we consider the preface, to be the first commandment, viz. "I am the Lord thy God," and so proceeds. Augustine (*Sermo* 148. De Tempore) combines the first and second into one, and divides the tenth into two, which is the division adopted by the Church of Rome. It is indeed often asserted against the Romanists, that they have struck the second commandment out of the Decalogue, because it forbids the use of images, and to make up the number, have divided the tenth into two. But this is a false accusation, and is refuted with manly candour by Bishop Heber. (*Bampton Lectures*, Lect. i. note (e).) They number the ten commandments differently from us Protestants; but it is a subject, on which, as Calvin well observes, "liberum cuique judicium esse debeat, ob quam non sit contentiose cum dissentiente pugnandum." (*Inst.* lib. ii. cap. viii. §. 12.) Those who may be curious to investigate this matter, will find ample information in

affect the present argument, which is, that the Decalogue is held up by our blessed Lord for universal obedience; that the observance of the sabbath is commanded in the Decalogue; and, therefore, that its observance is required under the Christian dispensation. As the inference is perfectly indisputable if the Decalogue be binding upon believers in the gospel, this is the point, the establishment of which must in the first place be attempted.

That no one is in this age obliged to obey any part of the Levitical Law, as such, is a truth which admits of no dispute; but there are laws incorporated with it which, on other grounds, are still obligatory on Christians. It is but too common with divines to speak of the Law of Moses in terms so low as to border on contempt. Yet, as it proceeded from Him whose purity is all-spotless, and whose wisdom is all-perfect, it must be worthy of its author, and should not be neglected in the more spiritual excellence of the Christian religion. As a preparatory dispensa-

Buxtorf, *Diss. de Decalogo*, §. 37. et seq.; Vossius, *De Decalogi Divisione;* Cramerus, *De Decalogi Distinctione;* see also Edwards, *Theologia Reformata*, vol. ii. p. 297—8; Pfeiffer, *Dubia Vex.* cent. 1. Loc. 96.; Buddeus, *Inst. Theol. Moralis*, P. 2. cap. ii. § 6.; Stackhouse, *Body of Divinity*, P. 3. cap. iv.; Hallet, *Notes on Script.* vol. iii. Disc. 1.; Walæus, *De Decalogo*, in Oper. vol. i. p. 94. et seq.; Gerhardus, *Loci Theol.* tom. iii. p. 19. et seq.

tion it was not intended for a complete system; and, being adapted to a specific object, it must, so far as it was ceremonial and political, be of a temporary nature. But the moral law remains in force, because it is the declared will of God on a subject in itself eternal and immutable, and because we are bid to observe it by the Author and Finisher of our faith. In his Sermon on the Mount, he corrects some misrepresentations of it, and explains it in a more enlarged sense; but the law that is corrected and explained is to be continued, otherwise it would be abrogated, not amended. When he likewise declares that our righteousness must *exceed* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, he must mean that we are to give up no moral rule which they observed[1]. Hence "although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any common-wealth, yet notwithstanding no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the

[1] Dr. Hey, *Lectures in Divinity*, lib. iv. Art. vii. §. xiii. "Quod effata Servatoris attinet, haud pauca quidem religionis morumque doctrinæ Mosaicæ placita, æternum valitura, modo aperte, modo tacite, ipsa probavit, suis discipulis commendavit, iisque suam institutionem, tanquam fundamento, superstruxit." H. A. Schott, *Epitome Theol. Christ. Dogmat.* §. 123. 8vo. Lips. 1822.

commandments which are called moral[k]." The obligation of these is not derived from the Mosaic polity, but results as well from some antecedent foundation in the law of nature, as from subsequent declarations in the Apostolic writings. Though the enactments of the Two Tables are clearly not binding upon us, because they are included in the covenant of God with the people of Israel, they nevertheless are so, provided they are agreeable to the eternal principles of reason and morality, or are authorized by the inspired teachers of Christianity. Is the Decalogue, then, either from its own nature, or from any Scriptural sanction, to be regarded as a divine rule of conduct to believers in the Gospel?

In answer to this inquiry it may be observed that its universal obligation may be inferred from the character of its precepts, which are a re-enactment of the law of nature written on the human heart. Of these precepts nine are unquestionably founded in the essential principles of morality, and, therefore, no less imperative under the Christian, than Jewish dispensation; but the subtilty of theological disputants has invented a mode of evading the force of the remaining

[k] *Church Article* 7. On the excellency of the Jewish Law, see Randolph, *Serm.* 10 and 11. annexed to his *View of our Saviour's Ministry.*

one. It has been averred to be only civil or ceremonial, and for that reason only binding upon those who were subject to the polity under which it was promulged. When it is urged, that, as nine of these commandments are confessedly of moral and universal obligation, it may reasonably be presumed that the other, which relates to the sabbath, is of the same; it is answered, "that this argument will have less weight when it is considered that the distinction between positive and natural duties, like other distinctions of modern ethics, was unknown to the simplicity of ancient language; and that there are various passages in Scripture, in which duties of a political, or ceremonial, or positive nature, and confessedly of partial obligation, are enumerated, and without any mark of discrimination, along with others which are natural and universal[l]. Two passages[m], are cited as examples.

It is not a little surprising that an argument so really futile should be approved by a writer of such judgment and penetration as Dr. Paley. The distinction between natural and positive duties was surely not unknown to the Divine Being, by whose inspiration the holy Scriptures

[l] Dr. Paley, *Moral and Political Philosophy*, lib. v. cap. vii.

[m] Ezek. xviii. 5—9. and Acts xv. 28, 29.

were written for our learning; and though in some passages ceremonial and political duties are enumerated, without any mark of discrimination, along with others which are moral, how does this prove that the Fourth Commandment is of a positive nature? Granting all that the argument asserts, it still leaves the question undecided, whether this particular commandment be ceremonial. It assumes instead of proving, and assumes moreover, what is nothing to the purpose; for, if the fourth commandment were merely ritual, it would, as a divine injunction, be equally binding. But it assumes what is not true; for it has been before demonstrated that the sabbatical law is not altogether positive, but belongs, at least in part, to the class of moral duties. That some portion of time ought to be allotted to the worship of God is, if any thing can be, a primary law of nature; and the command which imposes such a duty must of course have its foundation in reason and morality. Hence, as the fourth commandment is not a *mere* positive precept, it must belong to that class of duties which, from their agreement with the law of nature, are of permanent obligation.

This inference is corroborated by the Scriptural attestations to the importance and authority of the Decalogue. It was spoken with an audible voice by the Deity from Mount Sinai, out

of the midst of lightnings, and thunderings, and clouds. Interesting to the devout mind is the contemplation of this scene. The assembled bands of Israel, having been rescued from the vassalage of Egypt, by the out-stretched arm of Omnipotence, had arrived, under the conduct of their celestial guide, at the foot of Horeb and Sinai, whose rugged summits rise majestically above the parched and barren desert of Arabia. When Moses was commanded to set bounds about the mount and the people were bid to sanctify themselves, and neither to go up into the mount, nor to touch the border of it, how anxiously must they have anticipated some stupendous exhibition of glory and power[n]? On the appointed day the mountain top was enveloped with a darkness impenetrable to human gaze; a dense cloud of smoke ascended from the mount, which trembled to its foundation; and, as the eternal and consubstantial Word, the Jehovah of the Hebrew Church, descended, "the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder[o]." At length, we may well suppose, the roar of thunder ceased, the blaze of lightning intermitted, and, in this solemn pause of elemental grandeur, the voice of the Almighty

[n] Exod. xix. 7—25.

[o] Ibid. xix. 17—19.

sounded loud and appalling in the ears of the adoring multitude. After the divine mandate was pronounced all was still. To mark still more strongly the high importance of the laws delivered amid this scenery of magnificence and glory, God wrote them on two tables of stone; and when they had been broken by Moses in a moment of agitation and despair, they were again written on other two tables by the finger of God[p]. These, which are also called the tables of testimony[q], were put into the ark, which was deposited in the Holy of Holies within the precincts of the temple[r].

No other of the Jewish laws were spoken immediately by the voice of God; whether ceremonial, judicial, or moral, they were especially given to Moses, and by him communicated to the people. While the Decalogue was twice written by the finger of God on tablets of stone, every other law was merely inserted in a book by Moses at the divine command. The Decalogue was deposited within the ark, whereas the law of ceremonial ordinances was placed by the side of it in the Holy of Holies. What is the cause of this difference between the Ten Commandments, and

[p] Exod. xxxi. 18—xxxii. 15—xxxiv. 1. Deut. iv. 13—v. 22—x. 4.

[q] Exod. xxv. 16, 21—xxxi. 18—xxxii. 15.—xxxiv. 29.

[r] Deut. x. 5. 1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10. Heb. ix. 4.

every other part of the Mosaic law? That an eminence and distinction are given to these precepts beyond all the rest, it were absurd to deny; and, proceeding from an infinitely wise Being, who does nothing in vain, it must have been with some special design. Was it because the Almighty intended thus to point them out to the Israelites for the more particular test of their obedience? But they are only promulgated, like the rest, under the same sanction of temporal rewards and punishments. Was it because the commands of the Decalogue are of superior intrinsic importance? But in that case, how are they more applicable to the Jew than the Gentile? Was it because they are of a moral, not a ceremonial nature? But then, as morality is essentially immutable and eternal, they must be for ever binding. In short no other cause can reasonably be assigned for this pre-eminence of the Decalogue, than its being designed by the Almighty for universal reception. This alone accounts for its being singled out from the rest of the Mosaic laws, and distinguished in so singular a manner. They were spoken by the immediate voice of God, while the other statutes were given by the mediation of Moses, to denote that they were to be sounded forth throughout the whole world, while the latter were peculiar to the Judaic state and economy: they were

written with the finger of God to signify their identity with the law of nature imprinted on the heart by the same sovereign Lord: and they were placed in the ark to intimate their inseparable connection with the covenant of grace, of which the Holy of Holies was an emblematical representation [s].

The transcendant importance of these commands is often intimated in the sacred Scriptures [t]. They were emphatically called the Ten Commandments [u], the tables of testimony [x], the words of the covenant [y]; and it is very probable that, in several places of Scripture where the law of the Lord, or the testimony of the Lord is spoken of by way of eminence, a particular reference is made to these precepts. They occupy so prominent a place in the sacred code, and are in all respects so conspicuously distinguished from all the other laws of Moses, that it would be irrational to suppose them designed for the purposes of a temporary dispensation.

It has, indeed, been objected, that they contain

[s] See Irenæus, *Advers. Hæres.* lib. iv. cap. xxxi.; Witsius, *Æconom. Fœderis*, lib. iv. cap. iv. §. 16. et seq.; Owen, *Exercit. on the Sabbath*, iii. § 45.

[t] Deut. iv. 13—v. 22.

[u] Exod. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13—x. 4.

[x] Ibid. xxxi. 18—xxxii. 15—xxxiv. 29.

[y] Ibid. xxxiv. 28. Deut. iv. 13—ix. 9, 11, 15—xxix. 1.

matters of a civil or ceremonial nature, which relate solely to the Jews; as for instance, portions of the second and fifth commandments. But in my judgment the declarations referred to are not to be understood as belonging exclusively to the Mosaic polity. When Jehovah announces himself as "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him," common sense requires us to limit the threat to the temporal punishment of sin. It cannot be meant to affect the eternal salvation of individuals, for that would not only be a violation of all our ideas of divine equity, but would contradict the absolute promise that children should not be punished for their fathers' sins [z]. Regarded, then, in this light as a temporal threat, can we doubt its application to the times of the gospel, when we daily see children suffering for the vices of their parents? That the temporal effects of sin, are often extended to the sinner's posterity cannot be controverted, and must, therefore, be consistent with God's moral government of the world. One great advantage of this constitution of nature is, that it operates as a powerful dissuasive from vice. No motive can be conceived more effectual in checking the

[z] Deut. xxiv. 16. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. Ezek. xviii. 2, et seq.

criminal desires of man, than the dread of involving his posterity in the sad consequences of his crimes [a]. It is, therefore, no more inapplicable under Christianity than our Saviour's declaration,

[a] For any doubts as to God's moral government of the world a solution may be found in Bp. Butler's *Analogy*. Many writers, as Dr. Paley, *Serm.* 13.; Dr. Graves, *Lect. on the Pent.* P. 3. Lect. iii. § 2.; Collyer, *Sacred Interp.* vol. ii. p. 186.; Maimonides, *More Nevoch.* P. 1. cap. liv.; and many others, restrict the threat in the second commandment to the sin of idolatry; but I think improperly so, for the words are not "visiting THIS iniquity," i. e. the sin of idolatry just before forbidden, but "visiting the iniquity of the fathers," i. e. generally, in the divine administration thus punishing the vices of man. Again, some consider this visitation of the father's sin as threatened only against his wicked posterity, i. e. to be inflicted on "them that hate him," viz. God. "Ego—qui parentum culpam etiam in liberis mei osoribus ad tertiam usque generationem punit." Dathe, with whom agree the Targumist, Ainsworth, Boothroyd, Rosenmüller, &c. Michaelis thinks the threat is unquestionably to be understood in reference to the leprosy. *Comment. on the Laws of Moses*, Art. 208. Others again consider it as referring, not to individuals, but to the whole people of Israel. Pareau, *Institutio Interp. Vet. Test.* P. 2. Sect. iii. §. v. p. 282.; Hallet, *Notes on Script.* vol. iii. p. 76. But the ancient versions with the exception of the Targum, may be understood either of this visitation being upon the third and fourth generation of the *sinning parent*, or of his *sinning offspring*, I take it in its most general sense, as a threat of visiting the sins of parents upon their children, let these sins be what they may, but a threat, be it remembered, only extending to the *temporal* effects of crime.

that some of the prophets and apostles they shall slay and persecute, "that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation[b]."

When again Jehovah proclaims in the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee," we must believe the promise applicable under the gospel dispensation, for it is declared to be so by apostolical authority[c]. In the repetition of the law in Deuteronomy it added, "that it may go well with thee;" and thus an especial blessing is annexed to the discharge of the filial duties; a blessing indeed which has reference to this life, but which is not for that reason to be restricted to the period of the Theocracy, since a promise of temporal blessings remains to the faithful of all ages[d], and it does not seem to differ materially from our Saviour's assertion, "that the meek shall inherit the earth[e]."

[b] Luke xi. 49, 50.

[c] Ephes. vi. 1, 2.

[d] Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 30. Luke xviii. 30. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

[e] Matt. v. 5.[f].

[f] Some critics render למען יארכון ימיך not as E. T. "that thy days may be long, or be prolonged," but "they (i. e. thy parents) may prolong thy days," "nempe precibus suis ad Deum, quibus ut te diu incolumem servent orabunt," as Le Clerc

Thus no reason appears for restricting any part of the Decalogue to the peculiar situation of the Jews under the Levitical economy; the whole of it is applicable to the present state of things under the reign of grace, and those parts which may at first sight appear to be especially referable to the Theocracy are supported by corresponding declarations in the New Testament. But supposing it to have an especial relation to the Hebrew polity, this circumstance will not of itself evince its abrogation under the Christian religion. Allowing it to be, in some instances, adapted to the state of the Jews, to whom it was first promulgated, it may nevertheless be designed by the Almighty for perpetuity; as several parts of the Old Testament, primarily addressed to the Israelites, are applicable to Christians in a higher and secondary sense. This would be the more likely, if, like other brief and compendious summaries, the measure of obedience is to be regulated, not so much by the letter, as the spirit of the Decalogue. It is enough, however, for silencing the objection, to prove that no portion of it is *so peculiar* to the Jews as to forbid its extension to believers in Christianity [g].

explains it. As far as the present question is concerned this version makes no difference as it is still a *temporal* promise; but the standard version is preferable, and far better supported.

[g] Several other reasons are advanced by Hallet in his formal

That it still remains in force, obligatory upon Christians, is declared by the infallible authority of our blessed Lord. In reply to the rich man who asked what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life, Jesus said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultry, Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself[h]." Here our Saviour insists upon the necessity of keeping the ten commandments in order to eternal life; for though he expressly cites only five of them, he clearly intended to inculcate the observance of the whole. It would be absurd to suppose that by citing these alone, he designed to discharge his disciples from the obligation of the rest. They are all in one code of laws, all of equal authority, and five are specified to designate the particular commandments necessary to

attempt to prove that "the ten commandments given at Mount Sinai do not oblige Christians," but they do not appear of sufficient importance to require a particular refutation. His allegations from the N. T. viz. 2 Cor. iii. 6. et seq. Gal. iii. 24, 25. Acts xv. 28, 29. Heb. xii. 18. et seq. are clearly irrelevant; as these texts refer, not to the *Moral Law* of Moses, but to the *Mosaic Covenant*, which, it is allowed on all hands, is superseded by the New Covenant. (*Notes*, &c. vol. i. disc. 8.)

[h] Matt. xix. 17—19.

salvation: which are thus designated to be those comprehended in the Decalogue.

Both here, and in other places of the New Testament, where the ten commandments are referred to, those of the second table, and none of the first, are cited[i]: which, some account for by supposing that the Jews were not so chargeable with offences against those as against the laws of the second table; some, again, by supposing that it was meant to enforce the great duties of charity to our neighbours as a principal part of religion, and the strongest evidence of our love to God; while others are of opinion, to whom I fully accede, that our Lord and his apostles quoted from the second table, without any other specific view than to point out the necessity of keeping those commandments which are contained in the Decalogue. It is worthy of observation that, in the above cited passage, our Saviour adds, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which, as it is not a part of the ten commandments, must be understood, either as the sum of the precepts which he had cited, or as briefly expressing the substance of the tenth, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any

[i] Rom. xiii. 8, 9.—James ii. 8—11.

thing that is thy neighbour's." The clause is omitted in the parallel passages of Mark x. 19. and Luke xviii. 20.; but Mark, after the words "do not bear false witness," adds instead of it the prohibition "defraud not," which must also be interpreted either as explanatory of the foregoing clause, or as substituted for the tenth commandment [k]. At all events, it is beyond contradiction that our Lord, by referring to the Decalogue as a rule of conduct, has given his infallible sanction to its laws.

Again, when a certain lawyer, tempting him, asked which was the great commandment in the law, our Saviour answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets [l]." None of the ten commandments are here verbally cited, but reference is certainly made to them, for, by giving the substance of the two tables, Christ undoubtedly intended to ratify the whole. In the question of the Pharisee,

k See the commentators, particularly Poli *Synop.*, Wolfius, and Kuinöel. In citing the Decalogue, the Jews were not very solicitous of verbal accuracy. See Surenhusius, *Biblos Katal.* lib. ii. *Thes.* iv. et seq.; Kuinöel, *Comm.* in Mark x. 19.

l Matt. xxii. 37—40.

"Master, which is the great commandment?" the ten commandments are clearly alluded to, and, if our Saviour had meant to liberate his followers from their observance, he would doubtless have said, that the precepts of the law were now become of little moment in comparison of the new commandments which he was about to impose upon his disciples. But, so far from saying aught in disparagement of the Decalogue, he declares its sum and substance to be that upon which all the law and the prophets depend. That passages containing similar sentiments to those which our Lord delivers are to be found in the law makes no difference in the case [m]; for as the Decalogue is an epitome of the moral law, so are his two commandments an epitome of the Decalogue, and when he enforces these latter he virtually enforces the former, which is only a little more extended summary of the same moral principles. The text in Deuteronomy, cited below, immediately follows the chapter in which Moses rehearsed the divine proclamation of the ten commandments, to the first table of which he most likely referred; and that from Leviticus concludes

[m] "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. vi. 5. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Levit. xix. 18.

a recapitulation of various laws relating to a man's neighbour, and explanatory of the second table: if, therefore, our Lord be supposed to have alleged these, he must at the same time have referred to the precepts of the Decalogue. Considering also that these precepts must have been uppermost in the mind of a Jew in asking the question, which is the great commandment? it can scarcely be doubted that our Saviour, who knew what was in man, alluded to them, and that his intention was, in his reply, to enforce the obligation of the ten commandments.

In his sermon on the mount he declares, in the most explicit terms, that it was not his design to abrogate any part of the moral law. "Think not, says he, that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven[n]." That our Saviour in these declarations made a reference to the Decalogue is clear from this, that he im-

[n] Matt. v. 17—19.

mediately proceeds to explain the sixth, seventh, and third commandments[o], evidently regarding them as parts of the moral law which he was inculcating. He removes the false glosses which the Jews had put upon them, and shews their spiritual nature and extent, which is a full proof that he imposes them as a rule of conduct upon his disciples. If it had been his object to rescind any part of them, he would, it may fairly be presumed, have expressly said so; whereas he declares that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law," and "that whosoever shall break one of these least commandments," that is, which are esteemed least by the Pharisees[p], "shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" thereby confirming their entire and permanent obligation.

In another conference with the Scribes and Pharisees, "he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever

[o] Verses 21, 27, 33.

[p] So many commentators explain it, but Dr. Campbell renders it "whosoever shall violate, were it the least of these commandments."

thou mightest be profited by, me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition[q]." The fifth commandment is here cited, and those who made it of none effect are condemned; which implies the perpetual obligation of the whole moral law, of which it forms a conspicuous part.

In perfect unison with our Saviour's declaration concerning the universality and importance of the Decalogue, are those of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. In exhorting the Roman converts to the performance of their duties towards man, he says, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law[r]." St. Paul here cites five out of the ten commandments, and in sanctioning these five he cannot be understood otherwise than as sanctioning the whole. Had he meant that these five only were

[q] Matt. xv. 3- 6. Compare Mark vii. 7—13.

[r] Rom. xiii. 8—10

binding upon Christians, he would in all probability have said so, or at least something to this effect would be found in the sacred writings; but there is not the slightest intimation that some precepts of the Decalogue are to be observed in exclusion of the rest; and consequently when the Apostle authorizes one of its commands the same authority must be extended to all. He who appeals to a particular section of a Parliamentary statute, must believe every section to be in force, unless repealed by some subsequent enactment; and in like manner when any of the ten commandments are declared in the New Testament to be binding upon Christians, the rest must be inferred to be so, except they are expressly exempted; and as none of them are expressly exempted, we necessarily conclude that all are equally obligatory.

There are two other passages in the epistles of this Apostle to which the same reasoning applies. Writing to the Romans he says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet[s]." The citation is from the tenth commandment, and the unreserved manner in which he alleges it, proves that he considered the

[s] Rom. vii. 7.

whole Decalogue to be in full force. This will appear still more clearly by paying attention to the scope of the Apostle's argument. He had before declared that we are loosed from the law of Moses, freed from the obligation of observing it; but lest it might be hastily concluded from this, that it is "sin," that is, bad in itself, he in the verse quoted expresses his abhorrence at such a conclusion, and by citing the tenth commandment shews, that although the Levitical covenant is abrogated, the moral law of Moses, and especially the Decalogue, which is a summary of it, is of permanent authority.

In another place, discoursing on the duties of parents and children, he observes, in respect to the latter, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth[t]." The expression "with promise" is variously explained to mean, that it is the first commandment to which a special promise is annexed, that to the second commandment being a promise of mercy in general[u]; that it is the only commandment, properly speaking, with a promise,

[t] Ephes. vi. 1—3.

[u] Wolfius, Doddridge, Diodati, Harwood, Newcome, Whitby, Gill, Priestley, Macknight.

the others having a threatening also annexed [x]; that it is the first commandment with this promise, viz. which is mentioned in the next verse [y]; that it is the first of the second table having a promise [z]; that it is one of the primary or principal precepts [a]. Some of these opinions are perhaps reconcileable; but however the expression may be interpreted, the Apostle in this part of his epistle requires obedience to one of the ten commandments, the just inference from which is, that obedience to the remaining nine is equally incumbent upon Christians.

The same inference may be drawn from a passage in the general epistle of St. James, who declares that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law [b]." That there is in this passage a reference to the dicta of the Rabbins is evident from the collections of Wetstein and Schoettgen, yet the difficulty of interpreting it hath tortured the ingenuity of the critics. Among the various

[x] Bengel.

[y] Schleusner, Nov. Test. *edit. Koppiana.*

[z] See Poli *Synop.* Hammond, and Jaspis.

[a] Jaspis, Schoff, Rosenmüller, and Morus.

[b] James ii. 10, 11.

opinions the one most generally received is, that as all the commandments were given by divine authority, he who violates one of them, equally resists this authority as if he violated the whole; for in both cases he alike disregards the authority of the Lawgiver. But it is not easy to see how this sense can be extracted from the Apostle's words, nor, if it could, how it is consistent with the unalterable rules of equity. He who breaks one commandment cannot surely be deemed to resist the divine authority equally with him who breaks the whole. I am, therefore, inclined to take the phrase "he is guilty of all" as parallel with "a transgressor of the law," and to understand the latter, with Bp. Middleton, in the general sense of morality or moral law. Agreeably to this the meaning will be, he that offends against one commandment is "a transgressor of the (moral) law," or in other words, "is guilty of (violating the morality which) all (and every part of the law was designed to promote[c].") Whether

[c] Bp. Middleton, *Doct. of Greek Art.* p. 610. Semler (*Paraphrasis* in Jac. ii. 10.) proposes to take ἐν ἑνὶ after the Hebrew idiom for ἐν πρωτῷ i. e. whosoever shall offend in the first commandment, namely, that by which the Israelites are bid to worship God, and which our Lord calls the first and greatest commandment, (Matt. xxii. 37, 38.) But this is properly rejected by Rosenmüller, (*Scholia* in loc.) and Pott, (*Nov. Test. Edit. Koppiana* in loc.)

this be admitted or not, the Apostle actually mentions a part of the Decalogistic statute as binding, because he declares him who breaks it to be "a transgressor;" and if one be binding the whole must. In appealing to one part as authority St. James virtually ratifies the whole, just as a Roman jurisconsult, in citing one of the laws of the twelve tables, must have regarded them all as possessing the same validity.

From these references to the Decalogue in the New Testament, combined with the nature of the laws themselves, and the circumstances of their promulgation, it clearly appears to be still binding upon all to whom a knowledge of God's revealed will has been imparted. "The ten commandments, says Lightfoot, may be called the word of the word of God; for though all Scripture be his word, yet these in more special be his Scripture, to which he made himself his own scribe or pen-man: upon these commandments hang all the law and the Prophets, and these commandments upon two duties, to love God, and to love our neighbour[d]." It would be unjust, however, to infer from this that they form a complete system of ethics; for there are several duties both to God and man, which, without a very circuitous exposition, they cannot be made

[d] *Works*, vol. i. p. 1030.

to embrace [e]. It was reserved for the divine author of our religion to explain and amplify the moral code of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to exalt it to the standard of purity propounded in the Gospel. A morality so pure and refined can only be required of humanity under a dispensation wherein is promised from above supplies of the vivifying principle from which all acceptable obedience springs; the Decalogue is, nevertheless, an invaluable compendium of the most momentous laws concerning human duty; and by the aid of those rules which divines have prescribed for its exposition, it may be so extended as to include, though not all, yet the principal duties which we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves [f].

After demonstrating the Decalogue to be still in force under the Christian dispensation, it only remains to be proved that it enjoins the observance of the sabbath which to those who have even so much as read the fourth commandment

[e] See Barrow, *Exposition of the Decalogue;* Le Clerc, *Comment*, in Exod. xx. 1.

[f] These rules are enumerated by Towerson, *On the Decalogue* Disc. 5.; Edwards, *Theol. Reformata*, vol. ii. p. 299. et seq.; Dr. Burrow, *Summary of Christian Faith and Practice*, vol. iii. p. 5. et seq.; Stackhouse, *Body of Divinity*, P. 3. cap. iv.; Ridgley, *Body of Divinity*, vol. ii. quest. 99. Gerhardus, *Loci Theol.* Tom. iii. p. 38. See Dr. Graves, *Lectures on the Pentateuch*, P. 2. sect. ii.

must appear a work of supererogation. The seventh day is there ordered, in the most explicit terms, to be kept holy; and, as it is part of a law which has not been abrogated by our Lord, the sabbath must be of perpetual and religious obligation.

In searching the sacred pages of the New Testament with a view to the present question, it is material to enquire whether any thing which bears upon it can be discovered in our Saviour's conduct or discourses. This inquiry shall now be instituted, and the result, it is confidently believed, will afford additional confirmation of our former conclusions.

Our Lord, in the course of his ministry, was several times charged by his enemies with violating the laws relating to the sabbath, and how does he vindicate himself from this accusation? Did he tell them, either expressly or by implication, that all distinction of days was to cease under the religion which he came into the world to establish? No! His answers to various charges of this description imply the necessity and advantage of that institution; for, while he abates the rigorous observance of it, and condemns the Pharisees for their superstitious reverence for it, he in reality sanctions a due respect for it, and a proper attention to its duties. In some instances his argument is grounded upon its obligation,

and would be absolutely futile, if it were a temporary ordinance like the other Jewish festivals and rites. The truth of these observations will be abundantly confirmed by a review of his different replies to his adversaries who charged him with profaning their weekly holy-day.

In passing through a field of corn on the sabbath day his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and when the Pharisees charged them with the unlawfulness of the action, our Lord's answer was, "Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the Temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, that in this place there is one greater than the Temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath day[g]." Our Saviour here vindicates the conduct of his disciples by that of David, both a prophet and king, and of the priests in preparing the temple sacrifices,

[g] Matt. xii. 3—8. Compare Mark ii. 23—28. Luke vi. 1—5

thereby shewing that works of necessity could not be criminal on that holy-day. By referring to a passage of Hosea in which God declares his delight in mercy rather than sacrifice, he infers the lawfulness of exercising charity on sacred seasons. In this, it is true, he reasoned with the Pharisees upon their own principles, proving that they, as professing to be guided by the law of Moses, were bound to the performance of works of necessity and charity on the sabbath day; but much more is implied than a mere argumentum ad hominem, since his reasoning takes for granted the moral duty of a sabbatical observance. He allows no exception to that rest from labour which the Jews observed, except in cases of necessity and charity, and hence, though it is lawful, as he expresses it, to do well on the sabbath, he approves and sanctions the duty of resting from worldly occupations on that day.

This is very much corroborated by the declaration, that "the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath day," that is, has the power of mitigating the rigour of the Mosaic Law concerning it, and of dispensing with its obligation; and as he only modifies, without abolishing its observance, he virtually authorizes its continuance. The act of amending a law implies that it is not intended to be repealed. This is further confirmed by what is added in the parallel place of

St. Mark, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," which imports that it was instituted, not for the benefit of this or that nation, but of man in general, or, in other words, of all mankind. If he had meant to designate it as a transitory institution, he would have said that it was made for the Jews alone, and as such of no obligation under the new covenant. In reply to the question of the woman of Samaria about the proper place of worship, he openly asserts that the local worship of the Levitical ritual was to be done away[h]; and can we doubt that, if the obligation of the sabbath was to have ceased with the ceremonial law, he would have refrained from dropping some intimation of it? So far, however, is he from adopting this course of proceeding, that his argument is built upon the assumption of its perpetual sanctity[i].

Our Lord being in a synagogue on the sabbath day, he there miraculously healed a man whose right hand was withered; and to the

[h] John iv. 23.

[i] See Bp. Porteus, *Lect.* 10. *on St. Matthew.* The expression "Son of man" in the passage cited above from St. Matthew, is thought by some to mean *any man;* (See Priestley, *Notes,* and Kuinoël, *Comment.* in loc.) but, as it is the phrase by which our Lord usually characterized himself, there is no ground for departing from this signification in the place referred to. See Storr, *Opuscula,* vol. iii. p. 32, et seq.

Scribes and Pharisees who watched him whether he would heal on that day, in order to accuse him, he said, "What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole as the other[k]." Here is not a single hint of the sabbath being a ceremonial rite, or of a temporary nature; nothing which can be deemed in any way opposed to its proper observance; the conclusion, on the contrary, that "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days" is stated as an universal truth, which it could not be, except the sabbath was, in its true spirit, to remain universally binding.

When accused by the ruler of the synagogue for having on the sabbath cured a woman who had been bowed down with an infirmity of eighteen years, his reply was, "Thou hypocrite! doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound,

[k] Matt. xii. 11—13. Compare Mark iii. 1—12. Luke vi. 6—11.

lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day[l]?" His answer was in substance the same when, upon another occasion, he cured a man of the dropsy on the sabbath day[m]. In neither of these passages does our Saviour let fall the slightest intimation that the sabbath was to be abrogated, while, on the other hand, his argument shewing that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day, implies its continuance.

Our Saviour, as we are informed by St. John, having cured a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda, was pronounced by the Jews to have profaned the sabbath, to which accusation he replies in these words: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work[n];" viz. as the commentators are generally agreed, "Though my Father rested from the work of the creation on the seventh day, yet he *worketh hitherto*, continues to govern and preserve the universe on the seventh, as well as on other days, *and I work*, i. e. I do the same, having an equal right to work on every day[o]." The charge being the profanation of the sabbath the answer must have some relation to

[l] Luke xiii. 10—21.

[m] Ibid. xiv. 1—6.

[n] John v. 17.

[o] See Origen, *Homil.* 23, *in Numeros*, vol. ii. p. 359. B. and *Scripture Testimonies*, cap. iii. § 17.

it; but it cannot well have any other bearing upon it than this, that, as the Father's invisible operation was equally active on the sabbath as at other times, the Son has the same right to work at all times; and that, if the sabbath is not profaned in the one case, neither is it in the other. Our Saviour argues from the Almighty's unceasing operation that every kind of work does not violate the sabbath, in which argument the sanctity of the institution is necessarily supposed. In rebutting the inference of the Jews he grants their premises, that the sabbath was to be kept holy; which it is very unlikely he would have done, if it were to be abrogated under the gospel. In reference, probably, to the same miracle at Bethesda, he says, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment[p]." Here he reasons with them on their own principles, asserting that, as the law of Moses allowed circumcision

[p] John vii. 21—24.

on the sabbath, it must also have allowed such a cure as he had been performing, since it was vastly more important than any ritual ordinance. Thus without any the most remote allusion to the repeal of the sabbatical appointment, he by explaining its true nature, ratifies and confirms it [q].

Such is the line of argument used by our Saviour in vindicating himself from the charge of violating the law of the sabbath. In no instance does he intimate, even in the most oblique manner, the abolition of the seventh day's sanctity, which would be an astonishing circumstance if all distinction of days had been to cease when Christianity should prevail in the world. The law of the sabbath was promulged amid every accompaniment of solemnity and grandeur calculated to awe the Israelites into obedience, and the abrogation, if that had been the design of the Deity, would certainly have been communicated in a manner the most clear and explicit. Divine wisdom might not deem it requisite that the abolition of the Sinaitic statutes should be attended with the same appalling visitations with which they were delivered; but it would undoubtedly have been effected in a way not to be mistaken by impartial inquirers. If the repeal of

[q] The narrative in John ix. 1, et seq. supplies nothing in regard to our present subject.

a divine command is not made with the same clearness as the promulgation of it, men could not be assured of their duty respecting it; a situation in which it cannot be believed the Almighty would place his creatures. Nothing resembling an abrogation, however, either directly or remotely, is discoverable in our Lord's conduct or discourses; and, often as his attention was directed to the subject, he never so much as once hints at any future cessation of the ordinance.

Whatever may have been said to the contrary, there could be nothing in such a hint more alarming to the Jews, than in doing what they considered a violation of a festival which they so superstitiously observed; and it must have been much less offensive than the open declaration of his being the Son of the Father in a sense which they understood as an assumption of equality with God. In other matters he scrupled not to attack the inveterate opinions of the Pharisees; and, if the sabbath was to be abolished, why does he so cautiously abstain from any allusion to it, especially when occasions so often offered of announcing what was of the highest importance to have clearly published. Or, if in deference to the prejudices of the Jews, or from other reasons of a prudential nature, he had chosen to vail in some degree of obscurity a truth which might otherwise shock his contemporaries, can we doubt

that he would have done it in such a way as could not be misunderstood by believers in succeeding ages? To refrain from declaring a doctrine of high moment, or so to deliver it that the great body of his followers would inevitably misinterpret it, is wholly incompatible with the character of Him who partakes of essential Divinity. His silence, under all the circumstances of the case, is, I had almost said conclusive, evidence, that it was not the intention of Omnipotence to annul the weekly festival by the establishment of Christianity.

The mode of defence which our Saviour adopted against the charge of profaning the sabbath is irreconcileable with the supposition of its being only a part of the Levitical law, and to perish with it. He explains its real end and design; he corrects the notions of the Pharisees concerning it; he mitigates the rigour of the Jewish observance; circumstances so far from being adverse to, are confirmatory of, its lasting obligation. The very act of modifying a law imports it to be, to a certain extent, in force; as for example, in our Lord's explanation and enlargement in his sermon on the mount of some parts of the Mosaic moral code, is implied that this moral code, as far as it goes, is binding upon his followers. A law not intended to remain is repealed, not amended; for an amendment supposes the continuance of

the law in its altered state; and in like manner the very modification of the Pharisaic practice as to the sabbath implies the continuance of the institution. It is, moreover, incredible that he would regulate the existing rules of an ordinance which was to expire in a few years. His was the sublime object to lay the foundation of a religion which was to spread through every region, and to last till the completion of the gracious plans of Providence in the salvation of the world; it cannot, therefore, be believed that he would enact new laws concerning a festival which was to perish with the polity of the Hebrews. Hence, as he actually did modify the law of the sabbath its observance must be presumed to be essential to his religion.

So much may be inferred from the mode of his defence, in addition to which he lets fall some expressions altogether unsuitable to a temporary institution. In avowing that "the sabbath was made for man," he cannot be supposed to have uttered such a declaration in respect to a festival appointed only for the use of the Israelites. The maxim that "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day," in the unlimited way in which it is delivered, can only apply to an ordinance designed for universal reception. These, together with the assertions that "the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath," and that he is assimilated

to the Father in working on the sabbath, taken in connexion with the scope of our Saviour's reasoning, are strong attestations to the perpetuity of that institution.

Had it been the design of our Lord to abrogate the holiness of the seventh day, his conduct, in his controversies with the Jews respecting it, would be wholly unaccountable. He is frequently accused of profaning it, and in what manner does he reply to the charge? Did he tell his adversaries that he was about to abolish the sabbatical institution? that an hebdomadal cessation from labour was not to be observed under the kingdom of grace which he was establishing? or, that all distinction of days was now to be done away? No such thing. He never asserts that the keeping the seventh day holy was incompatible with the spirit of his religion; which is the more astonishing as such an intimation would have been the most complete answer to the accusation. He might have silenced the Pharisees by declaring it to be a ritual appointment, no longer necessary under the spiritual law of the gospel. But instead of this he chooses a mode of defence in which the obligation of the sabbath is assumed; he adopts a line of argument which implies its permanency; and, in addition, gives sufficiently clear intimations that it was not an ordinance of temporary duration. Such a course

of proceeding would neither be compatible with the rules of fair dealing, nor with the impeccable character of our Lord, in regard to an institution, the religious authority of which he was about to annul. He never compromised the truth in subservience to Pharisaic prejudice; and, even granting that there might be reasons for speaking cautiously on the subject in question, he would never have used expressions which imply directly the reverse of what he intended subsequently to promulgate. On these grounds, then, we conclude, that his mode of vindicating himself from the charge of profaning the sabbath, sanctions both an alteration in the Jewish laws respecting it, and the duty of dedicating the seventh day to the exercises of religion[r].

Proceeding with our investigation of the New Testament, we are supplied with another strong evidence of the appropriation of a septenary day to sacred duties in the practice of the apostles, and first converts. As the apostles, in all things

[r] Our Saviour's words, Matt. xxiv. 20. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day," have been appealed to as declaring the law of the sabbath to be binding upon Christians; (Owen, *Exercit. 3d. on the Sabbath*, § 47.) but it appears to me very clear that he refers to the Jewish sabbath alone, declaring it to be dangerous to fly on that day on account of the opinions, prejudices, and practices of the Jews of that age. See *ante*, cap. iii. sect. 1. p. 110. note.

relating to the guidance and regulation of the church, were directed by divine inspiration, their practice in regard to matters connected with the well-being of their infant society must have been agreeable to the divine will. Influenced by a piety the most profound, and guided by a celestial monitor, they would never authorize by their example any religious ordinance of merely human invention. Whatever was sanctioned by their practice must be allowed to be sanctioned by the Holy Spirit, under whose influence they acted. The only doubt that can reasonably be indulged is, whether it might not be of a temporary nature, necessary to the then state of Christianity, but to be dispensed with after the complete establishment of the gospel. The apostles, as appears from the sacred history, far from exhibiting an unbending severity of manners, accommodated themselves to the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed; they were made all things to all men that they might by all means save some[s]; but in these cases their practices evidently appear to be *so conformed*. Thus they consulted the infirmities of their weaker brethren by teaching such doctrines alone as they were able to bear it[t]; they sometimes complied with the Levitical ceremo-

[s] 1 Cor. ix. 22. [t] 1 Cor. iii. 2.

nies relating to vows[u]; and to purification[x]; they sometimes adhered to the rite of circumcision[y]; they privately assembled for divine worship[z]; and sometimes yielded to the prejudices of others respecting meats[a]: all which, it is clear beyond contradiction arose from a compliance with temporary circumstances[b].

This compliance seems to have been their invariable custom, as far as it could be carried without compromising the essential principles of the gospel; and, being the suggestion of the Spirit, is to be followed by all who are similarly circumstanced. No example can be more worthy of imitation than that of men illuminated with celestial light; at the same time this is required by common sense to be limited to cases strictly parallel. Nothing is more absurd than the application of what was meant for one age to a totally

[u] Acts xviii. 18.

[x] Acts xxi. 26.

[y] Acts xvi. 3.

[z] John xx. 19. Acts xii. 12.

[a] Rom. xiv. 20. 1 Cor. viii. 13.

[b] The apostolical decree sent from Jerusalem to the converts at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, (Acts xv. 1, et seq.) cannot be cited as an instance of such compliance, for there is considerable doubt whether it was designed to be temporary or permanent; a doubt which must remain till it be shewn satisfactorily who are meant by *the brethren of the Gentiles* to whom it was addressed, which is a difficult, if not impossible task.

different state of society and manners. But the apostolical practice in things, neither specially adapted to existing circumstances, nor in their own nature temporary, nor declared to be so in the sacred writings, is the very strongest evidence of their propriety and obligation. If the gospel contained no exhortation to charity, the example of the apostles in contributing to the relief of the poor would be sufficient to recommend the duty of pecuniary benevolence[c]; and, by parity of reason, their practice of religious rites and ordinances, if not originating in local circumstances, is just as strong evidence of their being suggested by the Holy Spirit, as their being expressly appointed in the Holy Scriptures.

Applying these observations to the sabbath, its permanent obligation must be allowed if the apostles have sanctioned it by their authority and example. In proof of this, it is not enough to shew that they have observed it, for they occasionally adopted some transitory rites; but it must likewise be shewn that there is nothing either in its own nature, or in the sacred Scriptures, designating it to be a transitory institution. They *might* keep one day in seven as a solemn festival out of deference to Jewish prejudices, or to the opinions and habits of those nations among

[c] Rom. xv. 26. Gal. ii. 10. Acts vi. 1—4.

whom they preached the gospel; and they *might* consider it only as a valuable means of furthering the establishment of a new religion in the world. It is therefore requisite to evince that the contrary is the fact; that, in its adoption, they neither acted in compliance with the manners, rites, and customs of Jews or heathens; and that they were not actuated by any considerations of local interest and expediency.

Now for this purpose it may, perhaps, be only necessary to allege the manifold benefits of the sabbatical institution, which have been before stated, and which are of such a kind as are not more advantageous to the nascent church, than to every succeeding age. But it is further to be considered, that it contains nothing in its nature and object which points it out as an accommodation to peculiar circumstances, or as designed for only a temporary continuance. It could not be adopted in compliance with Jewish notions and prejudices, since these were opposed and thwarted by the appointment of a different day in the week from the Jewish sabbath; neither could it be out of deference to the feelings of pagans, all whose prepossessions were inveterately hostile to every thing that bore the stamp of Hebrew usages. Alike beneficial in the end and in the means, and not more useful to ancient than to modern nations, it bears all the characters of an institution

intended for perpetuity; and if the first disciples of Christ had not regarded it in that light, they would, we may suppose, either have told us so, or dropt some expressions from which their sentiments might be collected. Not the slightest intimation to this effect, however, is to be found in the whole Christian Scriptures; and, consequently, if the Apostles really observed a weekly festival, not as a local and temporary, but permanent institution, its sacred obligation is demonstrated, inasmuch as their sanction, under these circumstances, is the sanction of inspiration.

That the first teachers of Christianity were accustomed to appropriate a septenary day to religious services, is evinced by several unanswerable testimonies. In the gospel of St. John we read that "the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you;" and also in a subsequent verse, "after (μετὰ) eight days again his disciples were within, &c[a]." Before proceeding farther it is necessary to remove an objection advanced by Heylin and others, namely, that the Evangelist's expressions should

[a] John xx. 19, 26.

rather be understood of the ninth or tenth, than the eighth day after. But it is the common phraseology of the sacred writers to reckon time *inclusively*; thus our Lord says in Mark viii. 31. that he must suffer "and after (μετὰ) three days rise again," and again in Matt. xxvii. 63. "after (μετὰ) three days I will rise again," i. e. on the third day. Again in Luke ii. 46. we read that "after (μετὰ) three days they found him in the temple," viz. on the third day as appears from the history. So in 2 Chron. x. 5. Rehoboam says to the people, "Come again to me after three days," and yet in the twelfth verse it is said that "the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king commanded." Many more instances may be seen by referring to the authors named in the margin[f], so that the phrase "after eight days," must be understood to denote the first day of the week following.

According to the history, then, the disciples of Christ were assembled on a particular day, and again the next week on the same day; and this is related without any thing leading us to suppose such meetings unusual, without any intima-

[f] Wallis, *Defence of the Christian Sabbath*, P. i. p. 20. et seq. Jephson, *Discourse on the Lord's Day*, p. 47, et seq.; Glass, *Philologica Sacra*, p. 473. ed Dathe; Bp. Pearce, *Miracles of Jesus vindicated*, P. i.; Bp. Smalbroke, *Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles*, vol. ii. p. 437, et seq.

tion of their being convened to transact some immediate and pressing business. The fact is mentioned with the simple brevity, and exactly in the same manner that an historian would use in referring to a customary practice. To suppose these meetings purely accidental, when we take the situation of the Apostles into the account, were most unreasonable. In the disappointment of their hopes of temporal grandeur, and in their dread of the enraged Jews, they would not have met together, except by particular appointment, or in compliance with an usual custom. But for what purpose could they assemble by particular appointment? Not surely to arrange any ordinary concerns of this world, at a time when they were shuddering at the cruelty of persecuting power; much less for recreation and amusement when, in bitter anguish of heart, they were lamenting the loss of a revered Lord and Master. It can scarcely, then, be doubted that they came together agreeably to custom, and for religious objects, at a season when religious sentiments must have had fullest possession of their minds. Humbled into a true sense of the nothingness of earthly things, and bending under the stroke of recent bereavement, they must have met as they had been wont, for the purpose of mutual advice and exhortation, and of soothing their wounded spirits with the consolations of religion. There

prostrate in prayer, they would lift up their devout supplications to God, that they might be strengthened to endure the trial which they had reason to anticipate, and that they might be enabled to contend successfully against the persecuting enmity of Pharisaic domination.

The occasion and the specified times of these meetings constrain us to infer that they were the stated seasons of divine worship, which proves, not only the early practice of assembling on the first day of the week for religious exercises, but that it was a practice sanctioned by the authority of the Apostles. Following their bright example, let us in seasons of gloom and sorrow, seek alleviation, where alone it can be found, in the promises of the gospel, and the hopes which it inspires. There are times when the cares of life press heavy upon the heart, when the mind sickens at the prospect of the future, and when the bosom throbs with unutterable grief; at these times indulge not the fallacious expectation, that care can be banished by redoubled ardour in those occupations which, upon trial, will be found to be only vanity, and to terminate in vexation of spirit. Not all the busy scenes of life, not all the revelry of pleasure can sooth the disquietude of an aching heart. Let the victims of misfortune, let the weeping mourner, let all who are tortured with silent grief, or wearied with the

frowns of the world, fly to the temples of the Lord, beyond the vestibule of which no sorrow will pursue those who worship there in the warmth of unfeigned piety. Let them pour out their souls before the throne of their Saviour and their God, and, as they kindle with the fervour of devotion, the beams of the Sun of righteousness will gradually dispel the clouds which have gathered around their head. A ray of comfort will be darted into the heart which has been beating with anguish; attendance in the congregation will be found a delightful service; and as the fascinations of the present scene vanish away, the glories of the future world will rise to the mind's contemplation, and, exulting in the mercies of redeeming love, the soul will be elevated to a state of peace and hope, unassailable by the light afflictions of the present hour.

But to return to the passage before us. The Evangelical history records that on both the days when they were met together, the disciples were honoured with the visible presence of our Lord, which marks, in the most emphatic manner, his approbation of their conduct. He appeared on the first day of the week, or sunday, and then absented himself till the following sunday when he appeared again, while they were assembled together, which stamps with his sacred authority both the object for which they were assembled,

and the stated return of it. For what purpose, except to distinguish this day above the rest, did he suffer the intervening week to pass without a repetition of his visit? At the first he gave them his solemn benediction, "Peace be with you;" and in confirmation of his resurrection from the grave, "he shewed unto them his hands and his side." At the second visit he repeated the benediction. He ordained or commissioned them to preach the gospel, and to plant the Christian church; "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed upon them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." In all this solemn and religious service there is something which seems very like the celebration of a Christian sabbath. The transaction, considered in all its bearings, must be allowed to shew, in no ambiguous manner, the Apostolical custom at the period of holding weekly assemblies and the concurring approbation of Christ.

The historian of the acts of the Apostles informs us of another transaction which establishes the practice at a later period. "We sailed away from Philippi, says he, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in

five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight[g]." The object of this meeting being to break bread, to participate in the Lord's Supper, and to receive the word of exhortation, for Paul preached unto them, clearly proves it to have been a religious assembly. The time specified, the first day of the week, and the manner in which the disciples are stated to come together, are plain indications of a practice already familiar. The expressions "when the disciples came together," imply that they were not specially summoned; and in this the meeting was evidently distinguished from the assembly of the elders of the church, recorded in the same chapter, which was convened by St. Paul[h]. Nor, though the apostle tarried with them seven days, is there mention of any meeting, except on the first day of the week; and why did he preach on that day rather than any other, if it had not been the time of their usual assemblies? "He had his choice of all the days; but probably the wind not being favourable for sailing, he did not chuse to call the church together before their usual time of meeting, and before that went from

[g] Acts xx. 6, 7. [h] Ibid. ver. 17. et seq.

house to house[i]." It is also worthy of remark, that the scene of this narrative is not in Jerusalem or Palestine, but in a distant country, where the Jews had no particular influence, and where, consequently, the practice did not originate from a compliance with Jewish prejudices. At Troas the apostles were under no necessity of conforming to established opinions and superstitious habits; they were at perfect liberty to appoint whatever day they chose for public worship, and as sunday was selected for this purpose, it must have been by their direction and authority, as the converts would not of themselves have presumed to establish such a custom. It was a custom, however, approved by our Lord; for when Eutychus, "as Paul was long preaching, sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead," he was miraculously restored to life again; which proves how acceptable in the sight of God were the weekly religious assemblies of the believers at Troas[k].

[i] Priestley, *Letters to a Young Man*, p. 46.

[k] The phrase "to break bread," in the passage above commented upon has been variously interpreted. Some, as Heinrichs, Morus, Pearce, Bengel, Rosenmüller, Kuinoël, take it to mean feasts in common or Agapæ, joined with the celebration of the Eucharist: others, as Lyra, Calvin, Heylin, understand it as denoting an ordinary meal or supper; while it has been thought, in this place, to denote, by a synecdoche, the whole of divine worship. (Glen, *Treatise on the Sab.* cap. 3. sect. 2. § 1.) But

In writing to the Corinthians St. Paul says, "Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come[1]." That the apostle does not mean to limit their laying by in store to one particular day alone is demonstrably evident, the original therefore, would be better rendered with Bishop Pearce,

I am of opinion that it denotes the holy Eucharist, though as that was usually accompanied with a feast called Agapæ, it may include both. See Mosheim, *De Reb. Christ. ante Const.* Cent. 1. Note (s); Vorstius, *De Hebraismis*, p. 689. ed Fischer; Michaelis, *Introduction*, vol. iv. cap. xiv. Sect. 2.; Bingham, *Antiquities*, lib. xv. cap. vii. § 6. et seq.; Albaspinæus, *De Vet. Eccles. Ritibus*, lib. i. cap. viii. x. Hallet, *Notes on Scripture*, vol. 3. Disc. vi.; Böhmer, *Diss. Juris Eccles.* Diss. 4.

The phrase used by the sacred writer, ἐν τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων, is rendered by Erasmus, Calvin, Gomarus, Heylin, &c. "upon one of the days of the week," or, "upon a certain sabbath," but it is not supported by any sound critical reasons. The inspired authors of the New Testament often put the cardinal number for the ordinal, as εἷς for πρῶτος, according to a well known Hebrew idiom, it is therefore clear beyond dispute that the phrase is correctly rendered in the authorized version, "on the first day of the week;" i. e. the day immediately following the Jewish Sabbath. See Schleusner, *Lex.* in voc.; Valckenaer, *Selecta e Scholis*, vol. 2. p 338.; Glass, *Phil. Sac.* p. 38.; Whitby, *on* 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2.; Wallis, *Defence of the Christian Sab.* P. 1. p. 30. et seq.; Gomarus, *De Sabbato*, cap. vi.

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

"Upon every first day of the week let every one of you, &c." It is the very probable conjecture of Archbishop Bramhall and Mr. Locke, that these savings for charitable uses were on that day to be deposited in some common treasury, or officer's hands; for if they were only to lay by at home, there would be need of a collection when the apostle came. The Jews were accustomed to make weekly collections of alms which, on the evening of the sabbath, they distributed to the poor[m]; and after this example, as Whitby remarks, St. Paul most probably ordained that the Christians should on the Lord's day make provision for the necessitous. The fact of similar contributions being in after times made in the churches on the Lord's day, is strong evidence that the practice began with the apostles. Certain, however, it is that St. Paul does enjoin pecuniary charity on every first day of the week, and there must have been some reason for specifying this day rather than another; for, had he only intended that each person should *occasionally* contribute to the necessities of the saints, to particularize the day would have been absurd. The exhortation implies that charity on every first day of the week was distinguished in some way or other from the rest; and that it was so distin-

[m] Authorities are cited by Buxtorf, *Lex. Chald. Talm. Rab.* in גבא and קופה.

guished by being appropriated to religious purposes, may be inferred from the nature of the injunction the object of which was charity, a virtue most likely to be exercised when the heart is softened by participation in sacred offices[n].

There is another text in the same epistle of St. Paul, to which the celebrated Michaelis has attached considerable importance on the present question. It occurs in the eleventh chapter; "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper; for in eating every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken." The expression κυριακὸν δεῖπνον, says he, may be translated, as in the Syriac version, "a meal which is proper for the Lord's day," or, "a sunday meal." In the controversy relative to the celebration of sunday, it is extraordinary that this translation of κυριακὸν δεῖπνον in so ancient a version as the Syriac should never "have been quoted[o]." But this seems to be an oversight of the learned critic, as the literal version of the Peshito, or old Syriac, is, "when ye

[n] See Chrysostom, *Homil.* 43 *in* 1 *Cor.* Dr. Priestley, *Letters to a Young Man*, p. 45. Bishop White, *Treatise on the Sab.* p. 211, 212. Bishop Pearce's version, "upon every first day of the week" is supported by the Arabic and Syriac versions, and several moderns: "primo quoque die hebdomadis," Rosenmüller; "primo quolibet septimanæ die," Schott; so Jaspis; and so it is understood by Bengel, and some in Poli *Synop.*

[o] Michaelis, *Introduction*, vol. 4. cap. xiv. § 2.

come together ye do not eat and drink as is fit for our Lord's day [p]." The Syriac indeed takes κυριακὸν for the Lord's day, in the passage under consideration; but it is not supported by any other of the ancient versions; it is a sense which cannot be extracted from the original Greek; and κυριακὸν δεῖπνον cannot be properly rendered otherwise than "the Lord's supper." This text, then, from the first epistle to the Corinthians has no relation to the subject before us, and I should not have noticed it but for the criticism of so eminent a scholar as Michaelis.

In the question respecting the apostolical practice, the much contested passage in the second chapter of Acts must not be passed over without examination. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, says the sacred historian, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as

[p] The version of Schaaf is, "Quum igitur congregamini, non sicut justum est die Domini nostri, comeditis et bibitis." That in the Polyglot is, "Quum convenitis non ut decet diem Domini nostri editis et bibitis."

the Spirit gave them utterance[q]." The full discussion of the various opinions of the matters here related would require a separate dissertation; though in this, perhaps, as in some other cases, the subject has been rather perplexed, than elucidated by the ingenuity of the learned. As far as we are at present concerned with it, two points are alone necessary to be made out, *first*, that the historian speaks of the actual day on which the feast of Pentecost was celebrated, and *secondly*, that this day was the first day of the week.

With respect to the first point, there can be but little doubt that the expressions "when the day of Pentecost was fully come," (συμπληροῦσθαι) mean, not the day when that feast was fulfilled and over, but the day of its actual celebration; for the verb is applied in this way, in the only other place where it occurs in reference to time. "And it came to pass when the time was come (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι) that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem[r]." Dr.

[q] Acts ii. 1—4.

[r] Luke ix. 51. "*Quum dies Pentecostes instaret*, aut, *adesset*. Is usus v. συμπληροῦθαι, incognitus scriptoribus Græcis antiquis, jure annumeratur loquutionibus ex Orientali fonte ductis. πλησθῆναι, πληροῦσθαι et συμπληροῦσθαι sæpius in his Libris S. S. usurpantur de Spatio *certo* temporis, vel *definito*, quod ad finem vergere incipit." Valckenaer, *Selecta e Scholis*, v. 1. p. 338. See also Hammond, *on Acts* ii. 1.

Lightfoot, however, and other critics of eminence, understand them to denote the day when the feast was over, and their reasons are, that, Christ most likely ate the passover on the same day with the rest of the Jews, namely on the fourteenth of Nisan, which was thursday; friday, on which he was crucified, was therefore the first day of the feast of unleavened bread; and reckoning seven weeks forwards, makes the day of Pentecost to fall on the saturday, or Jewish sabbath, which being "come," fulfilled and over, brings us to the first day of the week, when the disciples were "with one accord in one place."

But since the words in Acts most probably denote the day when the feast of Pentecost was celebrated, how does this accord with the *second* point to be established, that the day of the miraculous effusion of the Spirit was the first day of the week? This is a question of great difficulty, and one on which the critics are divided and perplexed; but that the feast of Pentecost alluded to fell on the first day of the week, seems to be evinced by the direction for computing the time of celebrating it. "Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number

fifty days[s]." This is not without its obscurities; but if this refers to the weekly sabbath, and the Jews were to reckon seven sabbaths complete, even to the morrow of the seventh, the feast of Pentecost must always have fallen on the first day of the week, which, Dr. Lightfoot affirms, was the computation of the Baithusians and Karraites. Again the feast of Pentecost, it is universally allowed was on the fiftieth day after the first day of unleavened bread, which was the second of the passover week. Now if Christ, as many suppose, ate the passover at the stated time, on the thursday, friday would be the first of the passover week, and saturday the first day of unleavened bread, and beginning to reckon from the day after, sunday, the fiftieth brings us to sunday again, the first day of the week, the day of the miraculous out-pouring of the Spirit. But further, the feast was to begin seven weeks complete from the time when they first put the sickle into the corn[t], they were then to bring a sheaf of the first fruits of their harvest, and the priest was to wave it before the Lord, "on the morrow after the sabbath[u]," that is, on the second day of the passover week, which, in the year of our Lord's crucifixion, was

[s] Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.
[t] Deut. xvi. 9—12.
[u] Levit. xxiii. 10, 11.

on the seventh day of the week, or saturday; counting then seven weeks complete brings us again to the first day of the week, the day of Pentecost.

This, it must be confessed, is a perplexing subject, but one thing is certain, that no interpretation or mode of calculation does necessarily exclude the first day of the week from being the day of the descent of the Holy Ghost. But the calculation built upon, Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. seems very strong in support of the opinion, that the feast of Pentecost must always have fallen on the first day of the week. Besides, if thursday, the day before our Saviour's crucifixion was, as appears most probable, the stated day when the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, the friday must have been the first day of the passover week; and according to the usual mode of numbering fifty days, or seven weeks complete, from thence to the Pentecost, this feast must in that year have happened on the first day of the week. Taking all these circumstances into consideration it must be allowed to be at least extremely probable that the feast of Pentecost mentioned in the second chapter of Acts, was celebrated on the first day of the week. The assembly of the disciples on that day could not have been accidental, as they were come together "with one accord," and it must have been for religious purposes, as

nothing else could have so probably brought them together "in one place:" we must therefore conclude that it was not a casual meeting, nor one for worldly business, but an assembly for Christian worship, on a day which was then usually set apart for that purpose; and, as the divine blessing was so signally vouchsafed by the shedding forth of the Holy Spirit, we must infer the divine approbation both of the day, the first of the week, and of the object for which the disciples were convened, which was the public worship of the Almighty.

The practice of the apostles in appropriating one day in the week to religion, may now be considered as sufficiently established; it has, however, been objected, that if their practice is to authorize any particular day, it would rather be in favour of the Jewish sabbath, and this is strenuously urged by Brabourne, and other sabbatarians. But the answer is easy. Though the apostles appropriated the first day of the week to sacred offices, they made no scruple in frequenting the synagogues on the sabbath day, in order that they might more effectually propagate the Christian faith. Thus when Paul and his company "departed from Perga, and came to Antioch in Pisidia, they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue

sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand, said," &c. And after concluding his address, "when the Jews were gone out, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached unto them the next sabbath," when "almost the whole city came together, to hear the word of God [x]." So at Philippi "on the sabbath day he went out of the city by the river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither [y]." The object, then, of the apostle in visiting the synagogues on the sabbath day was, not for the purpose of public worship, but for preaching the doctrines of Christianity: and such was the case when at Corinth, "he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Gentiles [z]," and at Thessalonica, when he "on three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures [a]."

These are the only occasions recorded of an apostle shewing any respect for the Jewish sabbath after Christ's resurrection, and nothing appears farther from their intention than to sanction

[x] Acts xiii. 14. et seq.

[y] Acts xvi. 13.

[z] Acts xviii. 4.

[a] Acts xvii. 1, 2.

the perpetual sanctity of that peculiar ordinance. St. Paul did not repair to the assemblies in the synagogues for the purpose of offering up praise, prayer, and thanksgiving, but to "preach," to "exhort," to "reason." He probably joined in the service performed there, but his motive was the propagation of those doctrines which he was commissioned to deliver both to Jews and Gentiles. And how could this object be more effectually obtained than by frequenting those places of public resort, where they had not only permission to teach, but where the people were prepared to listen to religious instruction[b]. The apostles were under the strongest tie to publish the gospel which could bind men to the performance of a duty[c], and they gladly seized every opportunity of proclaiming salvation through Him, of whom they were the servants and ambassadors. That such was their object in frequenting the synagogues, further appears from their custom of doing so on other days, as it should seem, than the sabbath[d]. There they resorted in execution of their apostolical office, and whether on the sab-

[b] That others beside the regular officers were allowed to teach in the synagogues is evident from Matt. iv. 23.—xiii. 54. Mark vi. 2. Luke iv. 16. John vi. 59.—xviii. 20. and many other places. See Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb.* in Matt. iv. 23.

[c] 1 Cor. ix. 16.

[d] Acts ix. 20.—xiii. 5.—xiv. 1.—xvii. 17.—xviii. 26.

bath or other days, for the synagogues were opened three times a week for the ritual service [e], their design was to preach Christ crucified; but when they assembled with the converts for Christian worship, it was invariably on the first day of the week. This difference in their practice shews the distinction between the Jewish sabbath, and sunday: the former being a temporary institution, they conformed to it in furtherance of the special object of their mission, but the latter, being voluntarily chosen by themselves, was consecrated to Christian devotion, and therefore to be dedicated to the same purposes in all succeeding ages.

A stronger argument for the religious observance of a septenary day, than the practice of the apostles, when all the circumstances are taken into the account, it were unreasonable to demand. Whatever they instituted was in reality instituted by the Almighty Being, by whose suggestion they were guided in all things relating to the church of Christ; and, if it were not undeniably of a local and temporary nature, it must be binding upon all who reverence their authority as inspired teachers. Their whole conduct, in reference to the subject in question, their selection of the first day of the week in contradistinction to the Jewish sabbath; their observance of it as well in other countries as in Judea; and the purposes to which

[e] See Brown, *Antiquities of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 619.

it was applied, prove that it was not intended to be limited to the apostolic age. If to this consideration we add the testimonies already produced from the New Testament, it seems impossible for a candid mind to resist the force of their combined evidence for the perpetuity of the sabbatical institution. Yet, in addition to this, there is some direct evidence which shall now be submitted to the reader's consideration.

In the Book of Revelations, St. John says, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day;" (ch. i. 10.) from which passage it is clear, that a certain day was distinguished as the Lord's, and if be inquired what particular day is thus designated, the only reasonable answer is, that it was the first day of the week, which was from the beginning set apart for the celebration of the sacred offices enjoined by the religion of our blessed Lord. It is an appellation conveying some pre-eminent dignity, which can belong to no other than that which has been reverenced subsequently in the churches of Christ by the same name. The apostle unquestionably meant by this appellation to specify the time when he received the apocalyptic visions; but how could the churches to whom the Revelations were addressed have comprehended the meaning, unless it had been the designation of a day with which they were familiarly acquainted? It is likewise mentioned without explanation, without

intimating any thing novel either in the term or thing signified, and must therefore have been known by that title when the book was written; but there is no other than the first day of the week which answers to this description, inasmuch as there is no other day on which Christ performed any work which could give occasion to such a name, except the first day of the week which was consecrated by his resurrection. Neither was there any other distinguished by the title of the Lord's day, as is proved by the unanimous consent of all antiquity; and the testimony of the early Fathers in this case must be considered as decisive, since they could scarcely be mistaken whether the first day of the week was intended by the just-cited text in Revelations[f].

The apostle, then, by "the Lord's day" meant that which was set apart for religious observance under the gospel dispensation; and such an appropriation of one day in seven during the first century, can only be ascribed to divine authority. The term itself imports a day either instituted by Christ, or consecrated to the offices of his religion; as in the only other place where the same Greek word occurs, the Eucharist is called "the Lord's Supper," because it was instituted by, and

[f] That the fathers with one voice declare it to be the first day of the week, which was consecrated to the service of the Tri-une God, will be shewn in a subsequent chapter.

in commemoration of him[g]. Similar expressions are frequent, as the Lord's temple, the Lord's priests, the Lord's people, the Lord's offerings, the spirit of the Lord, the grace of the Lord, the glory of the Lord, the word of the Lord, the cup of the Lord, the beloved of the Lord[h]; and they invariably denote, not only what is sacred and venerable, but what is consecrated to him, and sanctified by him; which shews that the Lord's day must signify a day which he has separated and sanctified to his service. There was a day emphatically and by way of distinction called the Lord's, the same which was afterwards so designated; and an inspired writer would not have distinguished it by this appellation, except it had been originally either instituted by the Lord Jesus, or by his authority. The consecration of one day in the week to divine worship, being of divine appointment, must be perpetually binding; and accordingly it has been transmitted from the apostles to the church of God, and happily continued throughout the Christian world.

The present discussion might justly be deemed imperfect, if no notice were taken of a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which has been con-

[g] 1 Cor. xi. 20. See Schleusner in voc. Κυριακός.

[h] Rev. xi. 1, 19. 1 Sam. xxii. 17, 21. 1 Sam. ii. 24. 2 Cor. iii. 17. Rom. xvi. 24. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 3. 1 Cor. xi. 27. Rom. xvi. 8.

sidered of great importance in the Sabbatarian controversy. It is confessedly one of no little difficulty, owing to the concise and eliptical manner in which the apostle has delivered his argument, and the full illustration of it would demand a long and elaborate commentary. As an attempt of this kind would require too large a space, I shall only state the result of an examination aided by all the critical assistance to which I have had access. The passage referred to includes the first eleven verses of the fourth chapter, in which the apostle, in exhorting the Hebrews to beware of an evil heart of unbelief, argues with them upon their own principles, and, taking it in connexion with the preceding chapter, the substance of the reasoning is, that a promise of entering into a sacred rest is made by the Almighty to believers in all ages; that this rest was not the seventh day rest, nor the rest arising from the possession of Canaan; and that, consequently, it was a far better, even a heavenly rest, from which, however, those who believe not will be excluded, as the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness were excluded from the rest in Canaan.

As of all the commentators which have fallen under my observation, Macknight and Abresch have most clearly represented the scope of the apostle's reasoning, it will probably be more satisfactory to cite one of their paraphrases than to

attempt a new one; and the former, being in our language, demands the preference. "*Wherefore,* since the Israelites were excluded from Canaan for their unbelief and disobedience, *let us be afraid lest a promise of entrance into God's rest being left* to all Abraham's seed in the covenant, *any of you should actually fall short of obtaining it.* 2. *For we also* who believe, being Abraham's seed, *have* in that promise *received the good tidings* of a rest in the heavenly country, *even as the Israelites* in the wilderness received the good tidings of a rest in Canaan. *But the good tidings which they heard had no influence on their conduct, because they did not believe what they heard.* 3. *Wherefore,* according to God's promise, *we* the seed of Abraham *who believe shall enter into the rest of God.* But it is a rest different from the seventh-day rest, *seeing he said* concerning the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness. *So I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest, notwithstanding the works of* creation *were finished,* and the seventh day rest was instituted, *from the formation of the world:* consequently the Israelites had entered into that rest, before the oath was sworn. 4. That the seventh-day rest is God's rest, and that it was instituted at the creation is evident. *For Moses hath spoken some where concerning the seventh day* rest, *thus: and God completely rested on the seventh day from all his works.* 5. *Moreover*

in this ninety-fifth psalm, the Holy Ghost said *again* to the unbelieving Israelites in David's time who were living in Canaan, *They shall not enter into my rest.* This shews that another rest besides that in Canaan was promised to Abraham's seed, which would be forfeited by unbelief, but be obtained by believing. 6. *Seeing then,* after the Israelites were living in Canaan, *it* still *remained for them to enter into God's rest* through believing, *And seeing they who first received* in the wilderness *the good tidings* of the rest in Canaan *did not enter in on account of their unbelief,* it follows, that they who receive or have received the good tidings of the rest in the heavenly country shall not enter into it, if they do not believe. 7. *Moreover, seeing the Holy Ghost specifieth a particular time* for entering in, *Saying* to the people by David, *To-day so long a time after* the nation had taken possession of Canaan, *as it is* written, *To-day when ye shall hear God's voice* commanding you to enter into his rest, *Harden not your hearts* against entering. 8. *For, if Joshua,* by introducing the Israelites into Canaan, *had caused them to rest* according to the full meaning of God's promise, *the Holy Ghost would not after that,* in David's time, *have spoken of another day* for entering into God's rest. 9. *Therefore,* seeing the Israelites did not, in Canaan, enter fully into God's rest, *the enjoyment of another rest*

remaineth to the people of God, in which they shall rest completely from all the troubles of this life. *For the believer who is entered into God's rest, hath himself also rested from his own works* of trial and suffering, Rev. xiv. 13. *like as God rested from his* works of creation. 11. *Since there remaineth such a happy rest to the people of God, Let us carefully strive to enter into that rest,* by obeying Jesus, *lest any of us should fall, after the example of the Israelites, through unbelief.*"

Though this passage, so admirably paraphrased by Macknight, affords, as is obvious to remark, no *direct* proof of the Christian sabbath, yet some circumstances go *indirectly* to establish its lasting obligation. For in the first place, it supplies a striking confirmation of the original appointment of the sabbath immediately upon the conclusion of the creative labour of Omnipotence. The apostle not only quotes the Mosaic account of the institution of the seventh day's rest, "for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works[1];" but his argument rests upon the assumption that it was instituted "from the foundation of the world," as is evident from the paraphrase of the third verse. If the law of the sabbath was first given in the wilderness, the reasoning is entirely inconclusive, since it is to this

[1] Verse 4.

effect, that the promised rest into which God sware the unbelieving Israelites should not enter could not be that of the seventh day, because they had entered into that rest before the oath was sworn. It must, therefore, have been appointed at the creation, which proves its perpetuity, for the command must, in that case, have been addressed to all mankind, and consequently universally binding.

In the second place, the seventh day's rest, as it should seem from this passage, was designed to be typical of the eternal rest in heaven. In the ninth verse the apostle says, "There remaineth therefore a rest (σαββατισμὸς) to the people of God," by which expression, as is generally agreed, is denoted a rest of holy bliss, such as God enjoyed when he finished his work of creation; and therefore, by using it, he intimates that the sabbath is an emblem or figure of the heavenly rest which remaineth to the people of God[k]. This is further evident from the next verse, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his," where the parallel shews that the sabbatical rest is a re-

"[k] Σαββατισμὸς est haud dubie idem, quod antea sæpius κατάπαυσις dicitur. Sed maluit Auctor hic σαββατισμῷ uti, quod legentis animum ad ea revocaret, quæ supra de Deo, septimo die quiescente, dixisset, simulque doceret, esse in sabbato *typum*, sive adumbrationem cœlestis vitæ, quæ et ipsa perpetuum sabbatum est habitura." Abresch, *Nota* in loc. See also Pierce, in loc.

presentation of eternal rest. And the same thing is implied in other parts of the apostolical writings; for St. Paul reckons the sabbaths among those things which were "a shadow of things to come," and in this very epistle he represents the Jewish ritual as a pattern, a figure, or shadow of heavenly things[1].

If the sabbath be in reality a type of the heavenly rest, this circumstance will go a great way in corroborating its moral and perpetual obligation. A type being ordained by the Almighty to adumbrate something future, must necessarily continue in force till the thing represented shall have actually come to pass. Its emblematical nature will never expire but with the accomplishment of the thing signified; for a type being of divine appointment, cannot be supposed to be annulled before the thing typified takes place. If the seventh day's rest were originally designed to be typical, it cannot rationally be believed that it would be abolished till that which it prefigures shall have arrived. The same wise purposes which were answered by its first ordination as a type must remain until that ordination be accomplished. Now the sabbath, the apostle intimates, is a figure of future happiness of heaven, and, as it can never lose its emblematical character, in

[1] Col. ii. 17. Heb. viii. 5. *et passim.* *See ante*, cap. iii. sect. i. § 3. p. 139.

which character also it will be ever equally useful, its moral obligation must continue till time be swallowed up in eternity.

Such is the decisive evidence of the sacred records of Christianity for the appropriation of a weekly day to religious exercises.

SECTION II.

Of the Day of the Christian Sabbath.

THOUGH we are bound to rest in the conclusion, so irresistibly established in the foregoing section, that our blessed Lord and his apostles have authorized the observance of a weekly festival; yet, as to the particular day, it may be supposed that we have rather retrograded than advanced in our inquiries. Whichever day of our week was blessed and sanctified at the creation, it is perfectly clear that saturday was the appointed sabbath under the Levitical economy, and it is equally so that sunday was dedicated to holy offices by the first disciples of our Lord. If the obligation of the sabbath be immutable, it is contended that it must extend to the identical day, and that a change in this particular annuls its religious sanction; which change having actually taken place must consequently exempt Christians from the penalties of its non-observance. This is an ob-

jection by which many persons of great piety have been startled, who cannot divest themselves of a latent doubt, whether the alteration of the time in the apostolical observance of it does not substantially abrogate the original appointment; and it cannot be denied that it seems at the first glance, to throw a degree of shade and obscurity over the investigation. The difficulty, however, is more apparent than real; but since our researches hitherto have not supplied an answer to the very natural inquiry, which day in the septenary cycle is to be kept holy? it is imperative to search the Scriptures whether they furnish a satisfactory solution.

Respecting this subject there are two principal questions, *first*, whether the sacred Scriptures determine the particular day in the hebdomadal revolution, and *secondly*, whether they require the whole day, the period of the diurnal revolution, or only a part of it, for the celebration of the Christian sabbath. If to these questions a satisfactory answer can be returned, nothing more can fairly be demanded in reference to *time;* and the task is much facilitated by our former conclusions.

No change, it is readily granted, can be made in the sabbatical appointment, except by the same divine authority by which it was at first instituted, it is therefore to be inquired, whether the exact day was originally specified by that in-

fallible authority. Now, in reviewing what has already been established from the Old Testament concerning the obligation of the sabbath as affecting Christians, it must strike every inquirer that the particular day is left entirely undetermined. While the seventh day is expressly enjoined, there is nothing which specifies the day from whence the septenary cycle is to be calculated [m]. In the original institution it is stated in general terms that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which must undoubtedly imply the sanctity of every seventh day; but not that it is to be subsequently reckoned from the first demiurgic day. Had this been included in the command of the Almighty, something, it is probable would have been added declaratory of the intention; whereas expressions the most undefined are employed; not a syllable is uttered concerning the order and number of the days; and it cannot reasonably be disputed that the command is truly obeyed by the separation of every seventh day, from common to sacred purposes, at whatever given time the

" [m] Ex communi Theologorum ore, hoc quidem humano generi præceptum ac imperatum esse, ut in memoriam creati intra exaëmeron hujus universi, semper post sex profestos dies, septimus festus agatur; at unde computationis hujus initium faciendum sit, id nullis legibus ita circumscriptum esse, ut non arbitrii libertati aliquid hactenus liceat." Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satanæ*, Confut. Lipmanni. p. 565.

cycle may commence. The difference in the mode of expression here from that which the sacred historian has used in the first chapter is very remarkable. At the conclusion of each division of the work of creation he says, "the evening and the morning were the first day," and so on; but at the termination of the whole he merely calls it the seventh day; a diversity of phrase, which, as it would be inconsistent with every idea of inspiration to suppose it *undesigned*, must have been intended to denote *a day*, leaving it to each people as to what manner it is to be reckoned. The term obviously imports the period of the earth's rotation round its axis, while it is left undetermined, whether it shall be counted from evening or morning, from noon or midnight.

At the establishment of the Mosaic polity saturday was reserved for a holy rest unto the Lord, and unquestionably by divine suggestion; but, as this might be only a ceremonial ordinance intended to be annulled together with the entire Hebrew ritual, it is to be inquired whether it be authorized by the fourth commandment, the only Jewish law relating to this subject which is binding upon Christians. The terms of the law are "Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.—For in six days the Lord made heaven and

earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." With respect to time it is here mentioned in the same indefinite manner as at its primæval institution, nothing more being expressly required than to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labour. The seventh day is to be kept holy, but not a word is said as to what epoch the commencement of the series is to be referred, nor could the Hebrews have determined from the Decalogue what day of the week was to be kept as their sabbath[n]. The precept is not, remember the seventh day of the week to keep it holy, but "remember the sabbath day to keep *it* holy;" and in the following explication of these expressions it is not said that the seventh day of the week is the sabbath, but without restriction "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God;" not the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septenary cycle, but, in reference to the six before-mentioned, every seventh day in rotation after six of labour. If every seventh day, therefore, be consecrated to religious exercises, whe-

"[n] Notare oportet nihil aliud in Decalogo præcipi, nisi ut unum diem è septem à labore feriemur: quis vero sit septimus ille dies, non designari: num septimus ab inchoata mundi creatione, an vero aliunde sumpto numerandi principio." Curcullæus, *De Esu Sanguinis*, cap. vi. in Ap. p. 956.

ther it be the first or the last, or any other day of the week, the law of the Decalogue is literally and substantially observed.

The reason alleged for hallowing the sabbath day, both in the primary command in Genesis, and in the Sinaitic law, does not limit it to any specific day of the week. The seventh day was blessed and sanctified BECAUSE God then rested, having made the whole in six days; but it is not said that this is the only portion of the septenary rotation to which he would afterwards bestow his blessing, nor that this portion was invariably to be kept; the statute merely is, that, BECAUSE God rested on the seventh day, he sanctified EVERY seventh day; and this event is equally commemorated by the observance of A SEVENTH DAY, calculated from any given epoch. The sabbath was made for man, and every purpose of its institution is answered, if, after every six days' labour, the seventh be kept as a day of rest, holy unto the Lord. And further, God blessed and hallowed the seventh day, not because it was the seventh day of the week, but because it was a day of rest; whichever part, therefore, of the hebdomadal cycle is made a day of rest, it is the day which he blesses and sanctifies [o].

[o] See Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. i. Curcellæus, *De Usu Sang.* cap. vi. Since this work was transcribed for the press, I have discovered that the view here taken of the day of

Whether the specific day for keeping the sacred rest be pointed out under the Christian dispensation is an inquiry of no easy determination. It is often argued that sufficient grounds exist in the practice of the apostles for believing the first day of the week to be constituted a sacred festival by divine appointment. And it may no doubt be very speciously urged, if this practice be allowed to form an invincible argument for the duty of keeping a weekly festival, it must as to the particular day which they adopted. But there are some considerations which strongly oppose such a conclusion. The inspired teachers of Christianity appropriated one day in seven to the purposes of religion, and they selected the first day of the week most probably in contradistinction to the Jewish sabbath which was on the last. They might also intend by so doing to shew the disciples that the design of God in the sabbatical institution was not to hallow any particular day in the hebdomadal rotation, but to require the duty of consecrating A SEVENTH PORTION OF OUR TIME to his service. There was, moreover, an especial propriety in making choice of a different day, when all that rendered the sabbath peculiarly Jewish was to be

the sabbath coincides with that taken by Dean Milner, *Sermons*, vol. i. Serm. 2. That it substantially accords with the opinion of several of the older theologians may be seen in Walæus, *De Sab.* cap. v. inter Opera, vol. i.

abolished; for, had they adopted the last day of the week, they would have afforded a pretext for the prevailing errors of the Judaizing Christians. This was, therefore, a wise, and, perhaps, necessary measure to guard against a pharisaic perversion of the purity of the gospel; but the same reason has no longer any force when the Mosaic polity is overthrown, and the Jews scattered over the whole face of the earth. It is not meant that their adoption of sunday was altogether an accommodation to existing circumstances, but it has every appearance of being thus intentionally distinguished from Judaism; and, as the same reason does not *now* exist, we can scarcely *now* be obligated to that particular time. Besides, the apostles no where require believers of all ages to follow them in this selection, and, though their example, even in this particular, should not be departed from without very sufficient grounds, it is not exhibited in the New Testament as a pattern for perpetual imitation. For these reasons their practice, while it is decisive as to the duty of keeping A SABBATH, does not render the day they adopted absolutely imperative upon succeeding generations.

In thus leaving the selection of the day to a certain extent open to the prudence and discretion of the faithful, divine Providence has acted in consistency with the whole tenour of his gra-

cious dealings with mankind. No express regulations are enjoined as to those matters which, not belonging to the essentials of morality, but variable according to the varying modes and customs of the world, are better left to human direction and appointment. Some rites and ceremonies, for instance, are indispensable in the church of God, yet the Scripture, omitting all specific enactments, merely propounds the general principle that all be done decently and in order; while every individual church is at liberty to enjoin, in the exercise of a sound judgment, what in such matters is most unsuitable to its own convenience and edification. In the same way the general duty of sanctifying every seventh day is promulged, while the particular day is not so precisely ascertained as to preclude each nation and church from subjecting it to such regulations as are most accordant with the sentiments and character of the people.

If the Almighty had intended to designate the day of the week upon which, and no other, the sabbatical rest should be consecrated, he would, it may be presumed, have defined it in a more specific manner. We are indeed incompetent to decide *a priori* upon the mode of the divine legislation, for such an attempt would require a knowledge of the whole plan of God's moral government of the world, to which the human mind is

utterly incompetent; but we can scarcely be mistaken in asserting, that he would not promulge in obscure and indefinite terms a law, which his creatures are bound to obey in its literal strictness. To do so would be inconsistent with the object of revelation to enlighten men on the important subject of their duties as responsible agents. If, therefore, he had intended to fix *invariably* the day of the sabbath, it is probable he would have said so expressly, and prescribed the mode of the septenary computation. As to the time of some of the Jewish feasts and festivals he gave most minute and exact rules[p]; and judging from analogy, it is reasonable to believe that he would be equally precise in his commands, had he willed the day of the sabbath to be unalterable. But in all the laws relating to it which are binding upon Christians the expressions are indefinite? they merely declare that THE SEVENTH DAY is the sabbath of the Lord, which, by fair construction can only imply that every seventh day is to be so kept, however the series may commence. The apostolical practice is decisive authority for observing a weekly religious festival, but there does not appear to be any thing which renders the particular time they made choice of imperative upon suc-

[p] Exod. xii. 2, 3, 15, 16, 18—xxiii. 15—xxix. 30. Levit. xxiii. 4, 5, 7, 32, 35—xxv. 9—xvi. 2, 17, 29. Numb. xxviii. 16, 18—xxix. 1, 7—ix. 3, 5, 11.

ceeding ages. Had the Deity intended to prescribe the identical day, he would doubtless have fixed the epoch from which the septenary revolution was to commence; and his not doing so is, I conceive, a convincing proof that he designedly left the law open in this respect for any future alteration which might become necessary, without any abridgment of the obligation to its observance.

Such a procedure was, perhaps, alone compatible with the several changes which, in the progress of ages, took place in the sabbatical appointment. The first sabbath that was kept in the wilderness was calculated, not from the epoch of the creation, but from the raining of manna [q]; and at the establishment of Christianity it was transferred from the last to the first day of the week; which alterations must be supposed to have been in correspondency with the successive alterations in the nature and design of the ordinance. In the progressive developements of the divine plans of Providence it acquired in some degree new ends and objects, the accomplishment of which most probably required a change in the time of its celebration. "In the first ages of the world, says Bishop Horsley, the creation of the world was the benefaction by which God was

[q] Exod. xvi. 4. et seq.

principally known, and for which he was chiefly to be worshipped. The Jews, in their religious assemblies, had to commemorate other blessings —the political creation of their nation out of Abraham's family, and their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. We Christians have to commemorate, beside the common benefit of the creation, the transcendent blessing of our redemption—our new creation to the hope of everlasting life, of which our Lord's resurrection to life on the first day of the week is a sure pledge and evidence[r]." From these successive changes it may be inferred that it may be again changed whenever circumstances render it expedient; for there is nothing in the last by which the day is unalterably determined.

It cannot well be imagined that the law of the sabbath would be inculcated in any other than this simple and unrestricted way. To keep one day in seven holy, resting upon a plain and easy computation, is a rule about the meaning of which no doubt can reasonably be entertained; but if the very day in a septenary series, either from that in which God rested, or from that on which Christ rose from the dead, was to be observed, it would give occasion to incessant and perplexing difficulties. Who could be sure that they punctually fulfilled the command in the day which they

[r] *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 222.

devoted to a holy rest? Would it not give rise to interminable differences of opinion? And would not such a doubt afford a specious handle to the cunning of incredulity, and cause many a conscientious scruple in the bosom of sincere believers? A law fixing the day in the hebdomadal cycle would depend upon astronomical calculations too intricate for the mass of mankind, and in the result of which the man of science must sometimes hesitate; and, even if it could be deduced with the clearness of mathematical demonstration, it would tend to no practical good. The plain precept to sanctify A WEEKLY FESTIVAL has all the benefits that can arise from fixing the numerical day on which God rested at the creation, or on which Christ rose from the grave; for which reason the Almighty, we may believe, would not encumber it with an enactment depending upon a chronological computation of weeks and days.

Nor after all would a specific law as to the numerical day be practicable in all ages, and throughout the world. We have no definite account of the day when the patriarchal sabbath was observed; and he would be no very culpable sceptic who should deny the accuracy of our calculations respecting the time of the Levitical sabbath, or the day of the Christian sunday. But granting that the seventh day from either of these two epochs can be clearly determined, this can only

extend to a few degrees of latitude and longitude around the scene of divine revelation; for as the day is continually changing with the diurnal and annual rotations of the earth, midday in one part is midnight in another; and consequently, if ancient chronology were more accurate than it is, the precise period of God's rest cannot, without great difficulty, be calculated for all places; nor, when this is effected, can it be every where religiously observed.

From these considerations it is justly inferred that the scriptural authority for keeping the seventh day holy, does not, in sanctioning the duty, absolutely determine the identical time. If one day in seven be consecrated to religion, the example of the apostles, as well as the provisions of the primæval and Decalogistic commands are in spirit and in substance complied with. No mode of computation being prescribed in the sacred Scriptures, leaves room for any alteration consistent with the regular sanctification of every seventh, after six days of labour. But though the law of God has not unalterably fixed the numerical day, several reasons evince a peculiar propriety in all churches throughout the world preferring the first to any other day of the week. By the liberty of the Christian law believers may, for good cause, select any portion of the week, without infringing the sabbatical enactments; yet, where it

can conveniently be done, there are strong grounds for adopting the first day of the week according to their respective modes of computing the periodical divisions of time.

The example of the apostles, guided as they were by the Spirit in their sacred ministrations, is entitled to the most respectful deference in whatever appertains to the worship of the God whom they served. Though no *precise* direction is given as to the TIME of the Christian festival, yet, as they were under the superintending agency of God, their selection of the first day of the week must have been best suited to the early age of the Gospel; and since there is nothing in the present state of the world, at least in Europe, requiring a change in this particular, to diverge from their practice would certainly be useless, and probably absurd. Nay, if it were *then* the wisest and best, it must *now* be deemed a practice from which the strongest grounds alone can justify a departure. Unless it can be shewn to be unsuitable to the present condition of human society, or that a change would be attended with additional advantages, to pursue a different course would be a daring stretch of culpable presumption. The practice in question appears in no respect better adapted to the primitive, than the present age of Christianity; and it is a duty to pause, in serious deliberation, before making any alteration in what has

once been sanctioned by divine authority. Who that is actuated by a humble, yet fervent piety, would willingly select a day for social worship different from that which was adopted by the inspired disciples of our Lord?

The appropriation of the first day of the week is authorized by some considerations of no mean force, and of universal application. Our Saviour appears to have honoured it with the especial tokens of his regard. He shewed himself twice on the first day of the week to his disciples who were assembled, as has been shewn before, for the sacred purposes of religion; he bestowed his peaceful benediction, instructed them in his doctrine, and by the symbolical action of breathing on them confirmed the promise that they should receive the Holy Ghost[s]. Here is a sensible demonstration of his approval of assembling weekly in the church for the exercises of devotion, as he would not otherwise have favoured them with his benignant presence; and it proves that the TIME of the meeting was not objectionable in his sight. It is a point gained to be assured that he does not disapprove of the first day of the week; for, as that cannot be said of any other, it ought in common prudence, as it should seem, to be adapted for public worship in succeeding generations. By his appearance he sanctified both the MEETING and the

[s] John xx. 19, 26.

TIME; and both, till the contrary is shewn, must be deemed fit and proper in every age of the Christian church.

This, it is true, does not appropriate this day to the absolute exclusion of any other; but there is another circumstance which seems to point it out as *peculiarly* fit for perpetual solemnization. On that day Christ rose from the dead, by which signal act of power he gave undoubted proof of his being the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and accomplished the great object of his piacular sacrifice. Though he suffered for our offences, he on that day rose again for our justification, and by bursting the bonds of the grave, triumphing over principalities and powers, and becoming the first fruits of them that slept, he is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour. By his resurrection he has proved that the demands of divine justice are satisfied, and that he has of a truth opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Between the completion of this glorious work, and that of the creation, there is an analogy so close and striking as seems to require a similar commemoration. In the production of the universe out of nothing we admire the power which effected it, the wisdom which contrived so beautiful a system, and the goodness which has diffused happiness in widespread abundance throughout the whole; but in the new creation in Christ Jesus, in addition to all

these, we adore the infinite mercy and benignity which has rescued man from the ruin of the fall, restored him to favour, and provided the means of raising him hereafter to transcendent and never-ending glory. As a regularly returning day was consecrated for a memorial of the visible creation, it is with equal propriety so to commemorate the spiritual creation, which no less conspicuously displays the perfections of Deity. It is natural to the feelings of a grateful piety to regard with something more than ordinary veneration the day on which our Lord consummated the redemption of the world: an event which will for ever excite the wonder and admiration, the praise and thanksgiving of intelligent beings and ransomed spirits. The solemn dedication of it to religious worship corresponds with the sentiments which those are delighted to cherish who are animated with the hope of a joyful resurrection, of which Christ's rising from the grave was the earnest and the pledge. This devout respect for the day on which he completed the work that the Father had given him to do, if not a commanded duty, is well calculated to draw our affections from earth to heaven, and to inspire our ardour in contending for the crown of glory laid up for the righteous. The keeping holy the day on which our Saviour rose from the grave is productive of the most exalted

associations, and forms a commemoration, at once devout and delightful, of the most stupendous event that was ever presented to the admiration and gratitude of mankind.

The preference of this day is supported by the example of believers in the Gospel from the earliest period. The authority of the church on a matter in which it was not possible to be mistaken, and in which there could be no temporary compliance with the opinions, prejudices, and manners of the times, is to be held in very high estimation. That the observation of the first day of the week constantly prevailed in the church, even from the days of the apostles, will be confirmed by abundant evidence in the ensuing chapter. The ancient Christian writers declare that this day was kept as a festival, with joy and gladness, in commemoration of the glorious resurrection of their Redeemer. "We keep the eighth day, says Barnabas, with gladness, on which Jesus rose from the dead;" and Ignatius says, "Let us live agreeably to the Lord's day, on which our life arose through him[t]." In honour of this day it

[t] Barnabas, *Epist.* § 11.; Ignatius, *Ep. ad Magnes.;* Justin Martyr, *Apol.* ii. p. 98.; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromat.* lib. vii. p. 744.; Origen, *Homil.* v. *in Isaiam;* Maximus Taurinensis, *Homil.* iii. *de Pentecost.;* Augustine, *Epist.* 119. *Serm.* 15. *de Verb. Apost., De Civit. Dei.* lib. xxii. cap. xxx.; Athanasius, *De*

was the universal custom to pray *standing*, whereas at all other times they *kneeled* in offering up their supplications; the reason of which is declared by the author of the *Questions and Answers* among the works of Justin Martyr to be, that in six days they prayed on their knees in token of the fall by sin, but that they did not bow the knee on the Lord's day to represent their resurrection, by which through the grace of Christ they were delivered from sin and the power of death[u]. The practice of the ancient church is a strong, and, as I am inclined to think, the strongest argument in favour of the first day of the week; for it is morally impossible that all the Christians of all places should unanimously agree in the observance of a particular day, without some direction claiming universal respect, which could scarcely be any other than a divine and apostolical regulation.

It has been often held that it is necessary for Christians to keep their sabbath on a different

Sab. et Circumcis; Chrysostom, *in Psal.* 119.: Balsamon, *Ad Canon Apostol.* 66.; Peter Bishop of Alexandria, apud Routh. *Reliq. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 343.; Theophilus of Alexandria, *Edict. ap Balsamum.* Tom. ii. P. i.

[u] *Respons. ad Quæst.* cxv. p. 468. See Cave, *Prim. Christianity*, P. 1. cap. vii.; Bingham, *Christian Antiq.* lib. xiii. cap. viii. §. 3. lib. xx. cap. ii. § 6.

day to the Hebrews, in order to manifest their protestation against Judaism. Believers in the Gospel, it is said, are to separate openly from the communion of the Jews, who, after their perverse rejection of our Lord, ceased to be the true church of God; and the sanctification of the saturday being the most visible and notorious character of the Jewish worship, it was necessary that the Christian sabbath should be transferred to some other day of the week. This is the opinion of the illustrious Horsley who, in concluding a very able argument, observes that "by keeping a sabbath we acknowledge a God, and declare that we are not atheists; by keeping one day in seven, we protest against idolatry, and acknowledge *that* God who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth; and by keeping our sabbath on the first day of the week, we protest against Judaism, and acknowledge *that* God who, having made the world, sent his only-begotten Son to redeem mankind. The observation therefore of the sunday in the Christian church is a public weekly assertion of the two first articles in our creed,—the belief in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord [x]."

Though concurring with a great part of this

[x] Bishop Horsley, *Sermon* xxiii. in vol. 2.

learned writer's statement, I must express my doubts whether a change as to the day of the sabbath is necessary for the avowed purpose of protesting against Judaism. I own myself unable to see the grounds of such necessity, or, indeed, any foundation in the sacred Scriptures for an open protestation against the Mosaic dispensation. As far as it was typical, ceremonial, political, it, of course, expired by the introduction of a new faith; and, in taking upon ourselves the Christian profession, we only adopt the old covenant so far as it is ratified in the New Testament; but where are we required to protest openly against it? How does it appear that we ought to change the day of the sabbath to shew our dissent from Judaism? If it were necessary in the primitive ages, how can it be so *now* when that polity is abrogated? In short, I cannot perceive why a change of the day is called for in order to mark our dissent from the Levitical religion. The bishop's argument, therefore, in my apprehension, carries but little weight; at the same time, there are other grounds, some of which have been already stated, why, as we adopt a different faith from the Jews, we should adopt a different day for the Christian sabbath.

Many more reasons have been brought forward for the change from the last to the first day of the week, but I am compelled to abandon them

as destitute of argumentative force[y]. The chief grounds for the transfer are those already stated, and it must be acknowledged that they go no further than to establish its EXPEDIENCY. Those ought not, therefore, to be charged with incredulity who believe that neither the sabbatical enactments, nor the practice of the apostles, amount to *a proof* of the religious obligation of devoting sunday exclusively to a sacred rest. More, nevertheless, may be said in favour of that day than of any other; it was certainly chosen by the apostles; it was recommended by special tokens of our Saviour's approbation; it was uniformly adhered to by the primitive Christians; and it is peculiarly eligible for the pious commemoration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead; the churches of God, therefore, do well in

[y] These reasons may be found in Lightfoot, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 272 and 1329, et seq.; Beveridge, *Thesaurus Theol.* vol. ii. p. 340; Archibald Hall, *Gospel Worship*, cap. x. §. 2; Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ*, P. 2; Durham, *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, P. 266—276; Willison, *Treatise concerning the Lord's Day*, cap. i. p. 36, et seq.; Loei *Effigiatio Veri Sabbatismi*, p. 39, et seq.; Edwards, *Theologia Reformata*, vol. ii. p. 446, et seq.; Dwight, *Theology*, Serm. 106; Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. ii.; Macbeth, *Diss. on the Sabbath*, sect. ix.; Glen, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, cap. iii.; Jephson, *Discourse on the Lord's Day*, cap. ii. See, on the other hand, Altingius, *De Temp. Inst. Sab.* lib. v. Heylin, *History of the Sabbath*, P. 2, cap. i. and ii.

appropriating it to the public performance of religious duties.

Differing in theory, as this does, from the opinion of those writers who hold the numerical day to be fixed by divine and apostolical authority, it is pretty much the same in its practical result. While I agree with them in the fitness, the *peculiar fitness,* of the first day of the week, I do not see it in the light of an imperative duty. Forcibly as this day is recommended to our adoption, I cannot perceive it to be unalterable; it is approved by our Lord, but not exclusively; sanctioned by the apostles, but not enjoined; so that room is left for any change which may become necessary by time and circumstances. The application of one day in seven to the exercises of devotion is a bounden duty; not so the appropriation of the first day of the week, which is rather a matter of prudence and propriety than of religious obedience. Yet it is a matter of propriety supported so strongly, that the most clear and convincing reasons alone can justify a departure; and any church would act very culpably that should select any other day, without being impelled to it by a due regard to the character, the circumstances, and habits of the people. Still, as the day is not precisely fixed in the Scriptures, it may be altered whenever moral or political

considerations exist sufficiently urgent to require a change.

To this doctrine, however, it has been objected, that to rest the appointment of the sabbatical day on such grounds, is pregnant with mischief. "It is certainly a very dangerous thing to make the necessity of God's worship, and the authority of the Lord's day, depend upon human orders and customs. For (as Dr. Prideaux argues in a book published long ago) what would it affect men that are busied about farms, and merchandize, and domestic affairs, to tell them of an human institution! Would they not easily set at nought all that could be urged in such a way? Would not profane men easily dispense with their absenting themselves from prayer and preaching, and give themselves free leave of doing or neglecting any thing, were there not something found in Scripture which should bind the conscience more than any human appointment [z]?"

To this plausible representation it may be replied, that it is our duty to receive with humility, and to maintain with firmness a doctrine founded in Scripture, in the conviction, that however it may appear to us, it must, in its consequences, be beneficial to man. Whatever is or-

[z] Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. ii. § 2. See also Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ*, P. 2. p. 2.

dered by divine Providence is wise and benevolent; and we need be under no apprehensions as to the supposed ill effects of the view of the subject here given, provided it be built upon the word of God. Besides, it is assuming too much to aver that it makes "the authority of the Lord's day depend upon human orders and customs." The religious solemnization of one day in the week has been shewn to be of divine appointment; hence the institution comes recommended by divine, not human, authority, though the particular day, it is believed, is not unalterably fixed.

What is there in this doctrine to excite alarm in the conscientious minds of even the most timid? Many duties are declared incumbent upon men, though the time, the manner, the opportunity, are left to human control and direction. We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together in public worship; and who ever considered himself absolved from the obligation, because neither the time nor the place are specified by the sacred writers? Is the Christian ministry less a divine institution, because no law is promulged concerning the age of admissibility, the mode of ordination, and the like. How many things in the administration of the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper are left to man's regulation, which neither diminishes

their authority nor their efficacy? In the church of Christ, discipline and various rites *must* be observed; but every thing of a ritual nature is submitted to the rubrical authority of ecclesiastical governors; and for the wisest reasons, since they ought to be adapted to the diversified habits, dispositions, customs, and circumstances of mankind. While the duty, then, of sanctifying every seventh day is allowed, being proclaimed by the sacred oracles of God, what danger is there in leaving it to every church to decide what part of the hebdomadal cycle should be considered as the seventh day? The duty of consecrating A SEVENTH PORTION OF TIME remains unchanged, the obligation unimpaired, though in one particular, as all moral duties are, in some respects, it may be left to human prudence and discretion.

Yet, satisfactory as this reply appears, it must not be forgotten that the designation of the day is not altogether a matter of arbitrary choice. A SEVENTH DAY must be selected, and SUNDAY was fixed upon by the apostles, no doubt by the suggestion of the Spirit, as it unquestionably was with the approbation of our Lord; and there are not wanting considerations which give it a propriety above any other day of the week. These circumstances, though they do not render its adoption *imperative*, fairly claim a *preference* for it;

and, being so recommended, to change it, without the most urgent reasons, would be an unwarrantable procedure.

If the opinion here advocated, that the numerical day of the Christian sabbath is not definitively established by divine authority, the sabbatarian controversy will be of very easy determination. There have been, and still are, some who still keep the saturday as a Christian festival instead of sunday. The rise of these sectarians, if they can be so called, is not clearly ascertained: in the primitive church, it was the custom of certain individuals to observe both the Lord's day and the saturday, in compliance with the prejudices of the Jewish converts, as is now practised by some members of the Abyssinian and Greek churches; but since the Reformation, there have been, both in this and other countries, some perfect sabbatarians. The historian, Fuller, makes mention of some who held these tenets towards the beginning of the seventeenth century[a]; and the subject was controverted during this age with much heat and asperity, as appears from the publications of Brabourne, Bampfield, and other sabbatarians, as well as from those of White, Prideaux, Wallis, Shepard, Batteley, Chafie, Brere-

[a] Fuller, *Church History*, lib. ii. See also Heylin, *Hist. of the Sab.* P. 2. cap. viii. Some sectarians in the twelfth century observed the Jewish sabbath. Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. 12. P. 2. cap. v. §. 14.

wood, Dow, Byfield, Lowe, Twisse, Heylin, &c. Two congregations of them exist now in London; but in England they are few, and chiefly among the baptists, while in America, where sects and schisms multiply with all the rankness of the vegetation of their native prairies, they are, as it seems, far more numerous [b]. Their peculiar tenet, as stated by Mr. Adam, is, that God hath required the observation of the seventh, or last day of the week, to be observed by mankind universally for the weekly sabbath; that this command of God is perpetually binding; and that this sacred rest of the seventh-day sabbath is not changed, by divine authority, from the last to the first day of the week, and, of course, the seventh day, which is still kept by the Jews, is obligatory on Christians. Now, if the view of the subject taken in this section be assented to, the fiercely agitated question, as to the TIME, must be pronounced to belong to the non-essentials of religion. If the sabbatical law does not fix the identical day, the sabbatarians cannot be convicted of a direct violation of it; but they are culpable in deviating, without any just and urgent cause, from the practice of the apostles and the Christian church of all ages. The evidence of Scripture, and the authority of antiquity, are in favour of the Lord's day; and as they produce no reasons for

[b] Adam, *Religious World Displayed*, vol. ii. p. 214, et. seq. edit. 2d.

a change sufficient to counterbalance this testimony, their views of the subject must be deemed injudicious and erroneous. They are further to be condemned for disturbing the unity of the Church on a point which, as the Scriptures have not given any *express* decision, all believers are bound to submit to the regulation of ecclesiastical authority in the bonds of peace.

So much for the first of those questions relating to this subject, which, in the beginning of this section, were proposed for discussion: the second question is, whether it be required to devote a whole weekly day, or only a part of it, to religious services. The latter is the opinion of many; for the custom of terminating the sacred rest of sunday early in the afternoon, is general on the continent, and some among ourselves contend, that we have only scriptural warrant for appropriating so much time as is necessary for public worship. "It will be remembered," says Dr. Paley, "that we are contending by these proofs, for no other duty upon the first day of the week, than that of holding and frequenting religious assemblies. A cessation upon that day from labour, beyond the time of attendance upon public worship, is not intimated in any passage of the New Testament; nor did Christ or his apostles deliver, that we know of, any command to their disciples for a discontinuance, upon that

day, of the common offices of their professions; a reserve which none will see reason to wonder at, or to blame as a defect in the institution, who consider that, in the primitive condition of Christianity, the observance of a new sabbath would have been useless, or inconvenient, or impracticable[c]."

That the professors of the Christian faith are not to follow "the common offices of their professions" on the Lord's day, will be shewn in a subsequent chapter; and with regard to the time, the only question with which we are at present concerned, the Scriptures appear very clearly to require the consecration of a complete natural day. At the original institution, God blessed and sanctified the seventh DAY; St. John, in the book of Revelations, speaks of the Lord's-DAY[d]; and the fourth commandment bids us to remember the sabbath DAY, to keep IT holy; by which phraseology, a whole day, or the period of a diurnal revolution of our globe, seems evidently intended. Had a portion of this period only

[c] *Moral and Political Philosophy*, lib. v. cap. 7. See also Towerson, *On the Fourth Commandment*, P. 2. p. 181. "Denique nullâ aliâ divinâ, quæque conscientiam liget, lege nos teneri temperari eâ die ab operibus servilibus, nisi quatenus illa nos avocare possunt ab exhibendo publico Numini, qui illi debetur, cultu." Capellus, *Diss. de Sab.* p. 304.

[d] Rev. i. 10.

been meant, the command would have been to keep A sabbath ON the seventh day; but the law enjoining to keep the seventh DAY holy, designates the whole, and not a part. Nor is there any hint in the sacred writings from which it can be gathered, that the Almighty will be satisfied with the separation of less than a seventh part of our time to his service; while, on the contrary, the law, both according to the letter and the spirit of it, demands the appropriation of so much time as constitutes an entire day.

Assuming the contrary, and maintaining that a cessation from labour on the first day of the week is not enjoined in the Christian Scriptures, Dr. Paley endeavours to prove that such a reserve was necessary in the primitive condition of Christianity. "During Christ's personal ministry," says he, "his religion was preached to the Jews alone. *They* already had a sabbath, which, as citizens and subjects of that economy, they were obliged to keep, and did keep. It was not, therefore, probable that Christ would enjoin another day of rest in conjunction with this. When the new religion came forth into the Gentile world, converts to it were, for the most part, made from those classes of society who have not their time and labour at their own disposal; and it was scarcely to be expected, that unbelieving masters and magistrates, and they who directed the em-

ployment of others, would permit their slaves and labourers to rest from their work every seventh day; or that civil government, indeed, would have submitted to the loss of the seventh part of the public industry, and that too in addition to the numerous festivals which the national religion indulged to the people; at least, this would have been an incumbrance which might have greatly retarded the reception of Christianity in the world. In reality, the institution of a weekly sabbath is so connected with the functions of civil life, and requires so much of the concurrence of civil law, in its regulation and support, that it cannot, perhaps, properly be made the ordinance of any religion, till that religion be received as the religion of the state."

This reasoning, however specious, is altogether hypothetical; and of all arguments those are the most fallacious which reason upon the divine proceedings from our notions of fitness and propriety. But allowing Christ and his apostles in the sabbatical appointment to have acted in some respects in accommodation to the primitive state of the gospel, a point which I feel no disposition to dispute, it does not seem fair to draw from it the conclusion which Dr. Paley labours to establish. If, in conformity with the then situation of the world, they maintained a reserve with respect to this institution, is it justifiable to infer from this circum-

stance, that they did not intend it to consist of an entire day? It would be more just to infer the contrary; for, if they did not speak out plainly, this silence implies that the whole truth could not, from prudential considerations, be *then* delivered; for which reason, if, as Dr. Paley supposes, they really used a reserve in the institution of the sabbath, it imports that there was something more than they chose at that time to communicate. They must have intended to establish either the whole of the seventh day, or a part of it, for the Christian sabbath. If they had designed the latter, they might, according to Dr. Paley's argument, have done so with propriety; and their not doing so, is presumptive evidence that such was not their design: but if they intended to enjoin the consecration of the whole day, some caution in announcing it *might* be requisite, considering the prejudices both of Jews and Pagans in that age. The reasoning, then, of Dr. Paley in the above passage, whatever weight it may possess, ought in reality to be placed in the opposite scale to that for which it was meant. It is, likewise, undeniably plain that Christ and the apostles did sanction the dedication of a weekly day to religion; and as they did not, at the same time, either expressly or indirectly, limit it to any given portion of that period, they meant, we may fairly presume, an entire day. Combin-

ing this with the reasons before adduced for believing this to be the actual fact, it would be unreasonable to doubt that we are bound to devote one whole day in the week to the observance of the Christian sabbath.

But clearly as this seems to be established, the mode of computing the day is left altogether indefinite. This, like other matters, respecting which no explicit directions are recorded in the sacred writings, must be left to the determination of every national church. As neither the epoch from which the hebdomadal rotation is to be counted, nor the mode of computing the diurnal divisions of it, are declared, they must be regarded as subjects upon which the word of God lays no stress; and therefore to be reckoned by all nations according to their customary methods of measuring time. To debate fiercely about the sabbath's beginning and ending, is to contend about that which is of little consequence, and upon which we have no adequate scriptural data for a decision[e]. Remembering that the sacred oracles were not given to satisfy the scruples of those who are inclined to cavil, but to supply

[e] The various opinions as to the time of beginning and ending the holy rest of the sabbath, are discussed, in a curious and amusing manner, by Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticæ*, P. 3. See also Ironside, *Seven Questions of the Sabbath*, cap. xiv—xvi.; Chafie, *Tract on the Fourth Commandment*, cap. i—viii.

general directions to the conscience, we should, in all cases of such a description, exercise a discreet sobriety and forbearance. We ought to accept with all thankfulness the light, whether it be little or much, which the Almighty has been pleased to communicate on points affecting the moral conduct of man, without presuming to dictate authoritatively where it shines with less than its wonted splendour.

Having now arrived at the end of our investigation of the sabbath under the Christian dispensation, it may be well to pause awhile, and to recall to our recollection the evidence which has been produced for the appropriation of a weekly day to the service of our God. It is surprising how it can be asserted, in opposition to testimony so ample and overpowering, that, under the gospel economy, every day is alike, and that, in this period of religious liberty, we are bound to the observance of no times or seasons. For the refutation of so dangerous an error, a body of evidence has been reviewed, which those may contemn who, in the littleness of human vanity, idolize human reason, but which it will ill become the devout believer in the gospel to scorn or reject. The original command of the sabbath has been shewn to be coeval with the world, which command having never been annulled by the same divine authority by which it was imposed, must

still remain in force, for Deity alone can abrogate the laws of Deity. It has been proved that, although incorporated into the Levitical code, it was even then remarkably distinguished from all the transitory ordinances of Judaism; that it is shewn, as well by express declarations of the Hebrew writers as by other circumstances, to have been intended to survive the extinction of the Mosaic polity; and that there is no direct or indirect abrogation of it in the Christian records, as might reasonably be expected, had its abolition been the original design. The moral law, from its eternal and immutable nature, must for ever demand obedience; and the sabbatical law, if not wholly moral, has in it so much of morality, and is so clearly founded on a natural dictate, that it must remain for ever binding upon responsible beings. If an abstract argument of this kind fail of effect, yet the prominent rank it holds in the Decalogue, which has been demonstrated to continue in force upon all who reverence the authority of Christ, is enough to stamp it with the character of sacredness. Our blessed Saviour, in his discourses with the Jews on the subject of the sabbath, is so far from giving any intimation of its repeal, that he reasons in such a manner as necessarily supposes its permanency; and by explaining its real end and object, virtually sanctions its continuance. The apostles, in con-

formity with the principles of their revered master, separated one day in the week to holy purposes; and, as in all that regarded the government of the church, they were under the guidance of the Spirit, their practice must be allowed to be the best comment upon the sabbatical duties under the Christian covenant. Not only did they and their immediate followers uniformly observe a septenary festival, but they, in different parts of their writings, let fall some expressions which infer its perpetual obligation. It has been further evinced that the scriptural requirements in relation to the sabbath, only go so far as to demand A SEVENTH PORTION OF OUR TIME for the service of God; but that, for several reasons, there is a PECULIAR FITNESS AND PROPRIETY in celebrating the Christian sabbath on the first day of the week, consisting of an intire natural day; not necessarily to be counted in regular succession from the actual time of our Lord's resurrection, for in that case it could not be observed in some parts of the globe; but to be reckoned according to the customary mode of counting the division of time in every church.

These testimonies, viewed in their combination, constitute an accumulated, and, it may be fearlessly avowed, an irrefragable bulwark, in support of the universal and permanent obligation of a weekly festival. But satisfactory as this evidence

must be deemed, it is not the whole which may be brought forward. It is corroborated by the attestation of the ancient Christian church, an attestation of vast importance, inasmuch as it confirms our interpretation of the sacred Scriptures in reference to the sabbatical institution, and as it shews the general belief of the faithful in the purest ages of the church on a subject on which believers could scarcely be mistaken, and during a period while inspired teachers, and those who had been taught by them, guided and directed the principles and practice of such as had been converted from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. This, therefore, shall be the next object of inquiry.

CHAPTER V.

The Testimony of the Primitive Christian Church to the Sabbatical Institution.

While prosecuting the inquiry which forms the subject of this chapter, I have often been compelled to lament the want of a more extensive library. Many are the valuable works which I wished, but in vain, to examine; some I have been able to consult only casually or in haste; and of others I could only obtain imperfect and inferior editions. Under these circumstances, the following investigation is not so complete as it might have been, if I had been so fortunately situated as to have access to the splendid academical or metropolitan repositories of ancient and modern literature. Grateful, however, for the literary stores, though limited, in my own possession, I have carefully ransacked the treasures they contain; and, without further apology, submit the result to the reader's consideration, conscious of its manifold defects, yet, at the same

time, assured that, under existing circumstances, I had not the power to accomplish more.

Common as it is, in the superficial, though wide-spread learning of the age, to despise the authority of the primitive Christian church, those who think more, and have drank more deeply of the wells of literature, regard her decisions as of great weight on all points connected with our religion. The Anglican church does not, like that of Rome, receive them with a blind veneration; but she ever pays a respectful deference to the voice of Christian antiquity. The ancient fathers were not always accurate in reasoning, nor invariably sober in judgment, and, generally speaking, were but little skilled in critical and philological researches; but they were eminently pious, unquestionably men of integrity; a character which renders them unexceptionable witnesses to the primitive faith. Those who flourished in the earlier ages, when the stream of traditionary faith was still flowing pure and undefiled, must have known what were the doctrine and practice of the apostles; and, as they appear to have been actuated by a sacred attachment to their religion, and a conscientious regard to truth and virtue, they must be considered as faithful interpreters of the general belief; a belief which could scarcely have been corrupted so near its source. On the subject under investiga-

tion, it was impossible for them to be mistaken, as they could not be ignorant whether the observance of the sabbatical institution obtained from the time of the apostles; and, if it prevailed among all the converts of the gospel from that early period, the inference is incontrovertible, that it must have been by divine and apostolic appointment [a].

[a] The authority of the ancient fathers is often too little regarded by Protestants: it is invariably contemned by those whose ignorance or indolence prevents the perusal of their voluminous works; and it has been virulently assailed by Daille, Whitby, Barbeyrac, Rosenmüller, and others; but there have not been wanting writers of great judgment and profound erudition, who have stood up in its defence. Much valuable matter relating to the fathers may be found in Bishop Van Mildert, *Bampt. Lect.* p. 112; Simpson, *Plea for the Divinity of Christ*, P. 8, sect. 1; Kett, *Bampt. Lect.*; Jahn, *Encheirid. Hermeneut.* §. 32; Ernesti, *Instit. Interpretis Nov. Test.* P. 3. cap. v.; Croft, *Bampt. Lect.*; Sherlock, *Present State of the Soc. Controv.* cap. ii. sect. 2.; Berriman, *Lady Moyer's Serm.* I.; Waterland, *Import. of the Trin.* cap. vii.; Gerard, *Bibl. Inst.* P. 1, §. 1; Ibott, *Boyle's Lect.* 2d course, serm. 4.; Hey, *Lect. in Divinity*, vol. i. p. 105; Heber, *Bampt. Lect.* 2, p. 72, et seq.; Cave, *Lives and Hist. Lit.*; Beverege, *Codex Canon. Procem.*; Reeves, *Pref. to the Apol.*; Buddeus, *Isagoge*, lib. ii. cap. iii.; Scultetus, *Medulla Theol. Patrum*; Le Clerc, *Epist. Crit. et Ecclesiast.* Ep. IV. But to enumerate the foreign writers on the fathers, would be useless; as most of them are mentioned by Walch, *Bibliotheca Patristica*, in which learned work may be found most full and accurate information on almost every thing relating to the fathers.

In searching the records of antiquity for the evidence bearing upon this question, our attention must be first directed to the celebrated letter of Pliny to the emperor Trajan, written while he presided over Pontus and Bithynia with proconsular power. "The Christians," says he, "affirmed the whole of their guilt or error to be, that they were accustomed to assemble together on a stated day before it was light, and to sing hymns to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a solemn oath, not for any wicked purpose, but never to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, never to break their word, nor to refuse, when called upon, to deliver up any trust; after which, it was their custom to separate, or to assemble again, to take in common a harmless meal[b]." This is evidently a description, though an imperfect one, of the celebration of the Lord's day, on which the Christians of Bithynia were accustomed to hold two distinct meetings, the one before sun-rise for public worship, and the other in the course of the day, when they partook of a repast in common, by which is designated the *Agape*, or feast of charity, usually in the primitive church accompanying the sunday's administration of the communion. Böhmer labours to prove this "stated day" to be the Jewish sab-

[b] Lib. X. Epist. 97. See Lardner, *Works*, vol. iv. p. 11. et seq.

bath; but his reasons appear to me altogether inadequate; since the services said to be performed upon it agree with the Christian sunday, and no other day[c]. It is the same to which the heathen in Minutius Felix refers, when he mentions that the Christians "came together to a repast on a solemn day[d]."

Passing from Pagan to Christian antiquity, the writings of the apostolical fathers, so called because they were co-temporary with the apostles, justly claim the first consideration. These are Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, and Hermas, of whom the first three only have any thing applicable to our present purpose. Clement Romanus, whom St. Paul calls his "fellow labourer, whose name is in the book of life[e]," says, that "we are to do all things in order, whatsoever our Lord has commanded us to do. We are to perform our offerings and services at the stated times, for he hath ordered them to be done, not rashly or disorderly, but at certain determinate times and hours[f]." But what stated and determinate

[c] Böhmer, *Diss. de Stato Christianorum Die.* §. 3. et seq. See Mosheim, *De Rebus ante Const.* Cent. I. Sect. 47, note (u).

[d] Minutius Felix, *Octavius*, p. 89, ed. Ouzil. Lug. Bat. 1672.

[e] Phil. iv. 3.

[f] *Ep. ad Corinth.* §. 40. From the circumstances alluded to in the beginning of this chapter, under which many of the authorities in this part of the inquiry were collected, it was impossible

times can be so probably meant as the returns of the weekly festival? Clement is clearly speaking of religious services[g], for which he says there were, even at that early period, appointed seasons; and it cannot rationally be doubted that the Lord's day was the principal.

Ignatius, in one of the shorter and genuine epistles, speaks of "those who, having been brought up under the ancient laws, come to the newness of hope; no longer observing Sabbaths, but keeping the Lord's day in their lives, (literally, living according to the Lord's day,) on which day our life sprung up through him[h]. In the interpolated epistle it is thus paraphrased: "Let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner.—But next to the Sabbath, let every one who loves Christ keep the Lord's day, his resurrection day, the queen and empress of all days—in which our life arose, and the victory of death was atchieved by Christ."

to cite in all cases, the original texts; for which reason they are omitted entirely. I hope, however, my translations will be found sufficiently accurate.

[g] See Bishop Fell's notes in edit. Coteler.

[h] *Epist. ad Magnes*, § 9. The Greek text is κατὰ κυριακὸν ζωὴν ζῶντες, but Cotelerius rejects ζωὴν without hesitation. If it should be deemed the true reading, and it yields a good sense, the passage will not serve our purpose; though Milner (*Church History*, cent. 2. cap. i.) thinks it will still be a manifest intimation to them to observe the Lord's day.

In the Catholic epistle of Barnabas, it is said, in explanation of Isaiah i. 13, "Behold how he declares, The Sabbaths which are now kept are not acceptable to me; but those alone which I have made; when, resting from all things, I shall begin the eighth day, which is the beginning of the other world. Wherefore we observe the eighth day with gladness, on which Jesus rose from the dead, and, having been manifested openly, he ascended into heaven[1]." The eighth day, it is well known, was a very common appellation, with the ancient Christian writers, for the first day of the week, or sunday.

So much for the first century: in the second we have a decisive testimony to the religious observance of the Lord's day in Justin Martyr, who flourished A. D. 140. "On the day called sunday (says he,) there is an assemblage in one place of all who live in the cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read, as the time permits. After this the President in a discourse admonishes and exhorts the people to live suitably to the good things they have heard. Then we all stand up together, and offer up our prayers; at the conclusion of which, bread, and wine, and water are brought, and, the President having poured forth

[1] Epist. § 15.

prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, the people unanimously declare their assent by saying, Amen. And there is a distribution and participation of the things for which thanks were given, and part is sent by the Deacons to those who are absent. Those who are rich give according as each hath purposed in his mind, and what is collected is deposited with the President, with which he relieves the orphans and widows, &c." And again, a little afterwards, he adds: "We all assemble together in common on sunday, because it is the first day in which God, having changed darkness and matter, created the world, and on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead[k]." In another place he speaks of the first day of the week, on which our Saviour rose, and calls it "the first of days[l]." These passages are too clear and decisive to require any comment.

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who, according to Lardner, flourished about A.D. 170, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, says, "To-day, being the Lord's day, we keep holy; in which we read the epistle written by you to us, as also the first epistle of Clemens[m]."

Contemporary with Dionysius was Melito,

[k] Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 2. p. 98. D. ed. Colon, 1686.

[l] *Ibid, Dial. cum Trypho*, p. 260. C. D.

[m] Routh *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. 1, p. 168.

Bishop of Sardis, in Lydia, who wrote a book on the Lord's day[n], which, if it had been extant, would, doubtless, have thrown much light upon the subject of our enquiry.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, A.D. 178, if we may give credit to the author of the *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox*, inserted among the works of Justin Martyr, speaks of the Lord's day as observed with peculiar ceremonies by Christians[o]. And in his Epistle to Pope Victor, relating to the Paschal festival, he says, that the mysteries of our Lord's resurrection should be kept only on the Lord's day[p]. This rests upon the testimony of Eusebius, the letter itself being lost, with the exception of the fragment preserved by that historian; and, moreover, it does not appear quite clear whether it be an exact quotation of the words of Irenæus, or Eusebius's statement of the position maintained by Irenæus; but in either case it proves the early observance of sunday. The same Father, speaking of the Decalogue, asserts, that "The Lord himself proclaimed the words of the Decalogue to all (mankind), and therefore they remain in force with us, extended and augmented, but not dissolved, by his advent

[n] Jerome, *De Viris Illust.* cap. xxiv.; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi.; Routh *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. 1, p. 129.

[o] *Respons ad Quæst*, 15, p. 468.

[p] Eusebius *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxiv.

in the flesh[q];" from which it is clear that Irenæus considered the Sabbath, the law of which holds a conspicuous place in the Decalogue, as obligatory upon Christians.

Clemens Alexandrinus, A.D. 194, speaks of the Lord's day as a well-known and customary festival[r]. Speaking of that part of the Decalogue which we call the 4th commandment, he describes it as "indicating that the world was made by the Almighty, who gave TO US the seventh day for rest, on account of the afflictions to which life is subject. For God is never tired, is not subject to passions, neither is he in want of any thing; but we, who bear about an earthly body, have need of repose; the seventh day, therefore, is called a rest, a cessation from evils, constituting the chief of days, OUR rest indeed[s], &c." Again he says, "He who hath executed the precepts of the gospel, (i. e. he who is a true Christian) keeps the Lord's day when he casts away evil thoughts, and entertains wise and good ones, glorifying the resurrection of the Lord on that day[t]."

Tertullian, about the end of the second century,

[q] Irenæus, *Advers. Hæres.* lib. iv. cap. xxxi, ed. Grabe. Oxon. 1702.

[r] Clemens Alexand. *Stromat.* 5. p. 600. A. ed. Sylburgius, Paris, 1629.

[s] *Strom.* 6. p. 682. C. D.

[t] *Strom.* 7. p. 744. C.

affords indubitable evidence of the custom, established in his time, of observing a weekly festival. In condemning the practices of certain Christians, he says, "O superior fidelity of the heathens towards their sect, which disclaims the Christian solemnities! They would not join us in celebrating the Lord's day or the Pentecost, even if they were acquainted with them; they would be afraid lest they should appear Christians; but we have no dread lest we should be pronounced heathens[w]." Answering the charge of the pagans, that Christians worshipped the sun, he declares, "We make sunday a day of joy, but for a reason very different from the worship of the sun[x]." He also says, that "the notion of the sun being the God of the Christians, has arisen from our praying with our faces to the east, or from our delight in sunday[y]." Likewise, "We deem it wrong to fast

[w] Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, § 14. p. 94. B. ed. Rigalt, Paris. 1664.

[x] *Apolog.* § 16. p. 16. B.

[y] *Ad Nationes*, lib. i. § 13. p. 50. A. The custom of praying with their faces towards the east, prevailed early in the Church, as appears from this place of Tertullian, and from many other authorities. (See Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom.* 7. p. 724. C. D; Cyril Hierosol. *Apol.* p. 327. ed. Milles; *Constitut. Apostol.* lib. ii. cap. lvii. lib. vii. cap. xxviii. *Respons ad Quæst.* 118. ap. Justin Martyr; Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, cap. xxvii; Augustine, *De Sermon Dom.* lib. ii. cap. v.) Various reasons have been assigned for it: but, however it originated, the custom

on the Lord's day, or to pray upon our knees;" and again, in the same Treatise, he makes mention of the Lord's day[z]. In another place he distinguishes the Lord's day from the Jewish sabbath[a]; and in some passages speaks of "the Lord's day's solemnities[b]." In adverting to the interruption of the sacred rites of the Christians by the military, he thus reasons: "But you will say, How shall we assemble? How shall we celebrate the Lord's day's solemnities? Just as the Apostles did, who were safe by faith, not by bribery. If faith can remove mountains, it may, with much greater ease, the soldiery." And, after some more observations to the like purpose, he adds, "Lastly, if you cannot assemble in the day time, you have the night, which will be illuminated by the light of Christ[c]." In his refutation of Marcion, there is an argument, too long to quote, but the scope of which is to shew, that Christ did not design to abrogate the sabbatical law, but to explain and amend it; and

amongst us of turning towards the east at certain parts of our Liturgy, is sanctioned by that of the primitive church. See Turner, *Discourse on the Apostolical Constitutions*, cap. ii.; Bingham, *Antiquities*, lib. xiii. cap. viii. § 15; Wheatley, *on the Common Prayer*, cap. ii. sect. 2. § 3.

[z] *De Corona*, § 3. p. 102. A. § 11. p. 107. C.

[a] *De Jejuniis*, § 15. p. 553. A.

[b] *De Anima*, § 9. p. 269. D. *De Fuga*, § 14. p. 543. B.

[c] *De Fuga*, § 14. p. 543. B. C.

in the course of which he asserts that neither Christ nor the Creator have destroyed the sabbath[d]; that Jesus is called the Lord of the sabbath, because he maintained it "ut rem suam[e]," that as the Lord of the sabbath he did not altogether abolish it[f]; and that he did not wholly rescind the sabbath, the law of which he observed, proving by his actions that he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; "for even here he fulfilled the law, whilst he interprets the conditions of it, whilst he illustrates the difference of works, whilst he does those things which the law declares to be exceptions on the sabbath holy-days, whilst by his own benefaction he renders still more holy the sabbath day, which was sanctified from the beginning by the benediction of the Father[g]."

Proceeding to the Christian Fathers of the third century, we find the most unequivocal attestation to the consecration of the first day of the week, in the works of the learned, ingenious, and indefatigable Origen, who was born A.D. 184 or 185, and died A.D. 253. In his Treatise against Celsus, he says, "If any one object to our observances of the Lord's day, (Good) Friday, Easter,

[d] *Advers Marcionem*, lib. iv. § 11. p. 423. C.
[e] *Ibid*, p. 424. B.
[f] *Ibid.*
[g] *Ibid.* p. 424. C.

and Pentecost, it is answered, that a perfect (Christian) who in word, deed, and thought, is ever with his natural Lord, the Word of God, always observes the days sacred to him, and keeps the Lord's days[h]." Commenting upon the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, he says, "I ask, on what day was manna first given from heaven? and I desire to compare our Lord's day with the Jewish sabbath. From the sacred scriptures it appears that manna was first given on the Lord's day; for if, as the Scripture says, it was gathered on six successive days, but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, it ceased, without doubt it commenced on the first day, which is the Lord's day. If, therefore, it is clear from the sacred Scriptures that God rained from heaven more manna on the Lord's day, and rained none on the sabbath, let the Jews learn from this, that the Lord's day, which we observe, was even then preferred to the Jewish sabbath; and that it was then indicated, that on their sabbath no grace of God descended upon them from heaven, no bread of heaven, which is the Word of God, came to them, &c.[i]" Again, in another place, he observes, "Leaving the Jewish observances of the sabbath, let us see how the sabbath ought to be observed

[h] Origin, *Contra Celsum*. lib. viii. § 22, vol. i. p. 758. F. ed. Delarue, Paris. 1733.

[i] *Homil.* 7, *in Exod.* vol. ii. p. 153. F.

by a Christian. It is by abstaining from all worldly actions and labours. If, therefore, you cease from all secular works, and execute nothing worldly, but give yourselves up to spiritual exercises, repairing to Church, attending to sacred reading and instruction, thinking of celestial things, solicitous for the future, placing the judgment to come before your eyes, not looking to things present and visible, but to those which are future and invisible, this is the observance of the Christian sabbath[k]." Origen does not in this passage expressly mention the first day of the week; but his contrasting it with the Jewish sabbath, and stating the way in which the sabbath should be kept by believers in the gospel, shew that he is speaking of the sunday of the Christians. Again, "Since many are now assembled because it is (Good) Friday, which is commemorative of the passion of Christ, pray to God omnipotent that his word may come to us; and especially (do so) on the Lord's day, for the resurrection of the Lord is not only celebrated once in the year, but every seven days continually[l]."

[k] *Homil. 23 in Numeros*, vol. ii. p. 358. D.

[l] *Homil. 5 in Isaiam*, vol. iii. p. 114. D. As the passage is perplexed, if not corrupt, I will present it to the reader. "Et quia nunc populi multitudo est propter parasceven, et maximè in Dominica die, quæ passionis Xti commemoratrix est (neque

About the year of our Lord, 248, flourished Cyprian, a prelate not more illustrious for his learning, virtues, and episcopal labours, than for the dangers and persecutions to which he was exposed, and the unshaken constancy with which he braved them. He unites in the general suffrage in favour of a septenary Christian festival. Asserting that the Jewish circumcision, being on the eighth day, contained a mystery fulfilled in Christ, he argues, "Because the eighth day, that is, the first after the sabbath, was to be the day on which our Lord should rise and quicken us, and give us the spiritual circumcision, this eighth day, that is, the first after the sabbath, and the Lord's day, preceded in the image, which image ceased when the truth supervened, and the spiritual circumcision was given to us[m]." This testi-

enim resurrectio Domini semel in anno, et non semper post septem dies celebratur) orate Deum omnipotentem, ut veniat ad nos sermo ejus."

[m] Cyprian, *Epist.* 64. p. 161. ed. Fell. Oxon. 1682. Also apud Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iii. p. 74, et seq. Several of the Fathers give a mystical interpretation to the rite of circumcision. Thus Justin Martyr says, "The command to circumcise infants on the eighth day was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from error and wickedness, through Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead on the first day of the week; therefore it remains the first and chief of all the days. *Dial. c. Tryph.* p. 260.

mony is of the greater value, since it is not the testimony of one Father alone, but of many; for it is taken from a synodical epistle of Cyprian and his colleagues, who were present at the third Carthaginian council under the episcopate of Cyprian, A.D. 253. The learned men of whom this council consisted, could not be ignorant of the general practice in the church, and they would not have sanctioned the Lord's day festival by a mystical interpretation of the rite of circumcision, unless they had believed it to be founded on divine authority. Again Cyprian speaks of one Aurelius, who was ordained a clerk, and "read on the Lord's day[n];" though the original it must be acknowledged, may be rendered "in the church," and not "on the Lord's day." The same doubt applies to another passage, where, speaking of a certain person, he says, "You are rich, and believe that you celebrate the Lord's day[o]," &c. The word used in these two latter passages denotes sometimes the Lord's day, sometimes the church, and sometimes the mysteries of our religion celebrated on that day in the church, as is remarked by Bishop Fell in his note upon the place last cited.

Commodian, who is placed by Lardner about

[n] *Epist.* 38. p. 75. "Dominico legit."

[o] *De Op. et Eleemosynis*, p. 203. "Dominicum celebrare te credis."

the year 270, mentions the Lord's day[p]. It is also mentioned by Victorine, Bishop of Pettaw upon the Drave, in Germany, A.D. 290[q]; and about the same period by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, and Martyr, who says, "We keep the Lord's day as a day of joy, because of him who rose on it; neither is it the received custom among us to kneel upon that day[r]."

To the Fathers already cited may be added Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who was born, as is thought, about A.D. 270. He mentions the Lord's day as a festival dedicated to Christ, without the slightest hint of its being a recent institution[s]. He says, "Constantine appointed for prayer that day which is really the first and chief of days, which is truly the Lord's day, and a day of salvation[t];" and in another place he repeats the same sentiment, in the same words, together with some enlargements[u]. Again, he eulogizes Constantine for commanding, that, "all should assemble together every week, and keep that which is called the Lord's day as a festival, to

[p] Apud Lardner, *Works*, vol. 2. p. 73. edit. 4to.

[q] Apud Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iii. p. 237.

[r] *Ibid.* p. 343.

[s] Eusebius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* lib. v. cap. xxiii. ed. Valesius, Paris. 1659.

[t] *De Vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. xviii. p. 534. B.

[u] *De Laudibus Constantini*, cap. ix. p. 628. C.

refresh their bodies, and to stir up their minds with divine precepts and instruction[x]."

Constantine was born about A.D. 273, and died A.D. 337. He was the first emperor who made public profession of Christianity; and he promulged several laws for the regular and orderly observance of the Lord's day. By a general enactment he commanded, as Eusebius expresses it, "that those who lived within the Roman empire should rest on the day entitled from our Saviour," i. e. the Lord's day[y]. He likewise

[x] *Ibid.* cap. xvii. p. 664. C. The text is *καὶ αὐτὰ σώματα πιαίνειν*, upon which Valesius remarks, "Scio quidem Christianos diebus Dominicis lautius epulari solitos. Verum *τὸ πιαίνειν* non convenit Christianis. Quare no dubito quin Eusebius scripserit, *καὶ οὐ τὰ σώματα πιαινειν.*" But I see not why *πιαίνειν* may not be used figuratively in the sense expressed in my version. (See Hederici Lex. ed. 1821.) This is preferable to altering the text upon conjecture.

[y] *De Vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. xviii. p. 534. C. Eusebius adds, *ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς τοῦ σαββάτου τιμᾶν*, where Valesius says, "Scribendum est procul dubio *τὴν πρὸ τοῦ σαββάτου.*" This certainly derives some confirmation from Sozomen, who says, that Constantine "ordered that on the Lord's day, which the Hebrews call the first day of the week, but the Greeks, sunday, and on the day before the seventh, (*τὴν πρὸ τῆς ἑβδόμης*) all should rest from their labours, and address the Deity in prayer and supplication." (*Hist.* lib. i. cap. vii. apud Valesium.) So Pollux *in Chronico* as cited by Suicer. (*Thesaur. Ecclesiast.* vol. ii. p. 185.) Be this as it may, the expressions of Eusebius do not imply that they should honour the sabbath, i. e. the saturday,

passed a law that those who governed in the provinces should reverence the Lord's day[z]. In the Justinian code there is an edict of Constantine which enacts, that "all judges, inhabitants, of the cities, and artificers, should rest on the venerable sunday; but that husbandmen might freely and safely apply to the business of agriculture; since it often happens that the sowing of corn and planting of vines cannot be so advantageously performed on any other day: lest by neglecting the opportunity, they should lose the benefits granted by heaven[a]." In particular, he ordered all legal proceedings to be suspended on that day, except such as required immediate execution, and such as could not be deferred without intrenching upon charity and justice[b]. He commanded his army to rest on sunday from all military exercises; and he ordered the Christians who were soldiers, as they were discharged from any other business and employment, to perform their devotions agreeably to the institutions of the church

in like manner as sunday, but that they should *likewise* honour it; ὁμοίως δὲ. See Hoogeveen, *De Particulis*, in ὅμως.

[z] Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. xxiii. p. 536. C.

[a] *Cod. Justin.* lib. iii. Tit. 12. de Feriis, Leg. 3.

[b] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. viii. *Cod. Theodos.* lib. ii. Tit. 8. de Feriis. See other laws to the same effect cited by Bingham, *Antiquities*, lib. xx. cap. ii. § 2., and Suicer, *Thesaur. Ecclesiast.* vol. ii. p. 185.

of God [c]. To the Heathens who were in the army he gave orders to repair into the open fields, and there, upon a signal being given, to offer up their supplications to the Deity; teaching them, as Eusebius remarks, "not to confide in their spears, or armour, or bodily strength, but to acknowledge Him who is God over all, the giver of all good things, and of victory itself, to whom they ought to offer solemn supplications, lifting up their hands to heaven, and raising the eyes of their minds, to the King of heaven, and whom they ought to invoke as the giver of victory, as their Saviour, Guardian, and Helper [d]." He moreover gave to his soldiers a form of prayer, which, according to Eusebius, was as follows: "We acknowledge thee to be the only God; we confess thee to be the King; we invoke thee as our Helper. From thee we have obtained victory; by thee we have overcome our enemies; to thee we refer the good things that we enjoy; and for future ones our hopes are centered in thee. We implore thee long to preserve to us our emperor Constantine, and his pious offspring, safe and victorious [e]."

[c] Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, lib. iv. cap. xviii. p. 534. D.

[d] *Ibid.* lib. iv. cap. xix. p. 535. A. B.

[e] *Ibid.* lib. iv. cap. xx. p. 535. C. There is a passage in Eusebius's Life of Constantine which has given the learned some trouble. He says, that, by order of Constantine, the

The assertion of Nicephorus, that Constantine gave the name of Lord's day to that which the Hebrews call the first day of the week, and the Greeks sunday, is abundantly refuted by the authorities already adduced, which prove that this appellation was in use from the time of the apostles[f]. It is also clear beyond all contradiction, that Constantine enforced, by legal enactments, the sanctity of the Lord's day; and the only question is, whether he was influenced by consi-

doors of the idol-worship were closed to all who lived in the Roman empire, and that every kind of sacrifice was forbidden: πύλαι ἀπεκλείοντο εἰδωλολατρίας, θυσίας τε τρόπος ἀπηγορεύετο πᾶς. (lib. iv. cap. xxiii. p. 536. C.) On this place Valesius remarks; "Hæc benigne interpretanda sunt. Constat enim sacrificia Gentilium à Constantino Magno non fuisse nominatim prohibita, ut diserte dicet Libanius in oratione pro templis. Privata quidem et domestica sacrificia Constantinus lege lata prohibuit, ut patet ex codice Theodosiano de maleficis et mathematicis, et ex lege prima de paganis. Sed publica ac solemnia, quæ a majoribus instituta fuerant, non inhibuit." Now I submit, whether the difficulty may not be better obviated by supposing that Eusebius's remark refers solely to the Lord's day; as in the very next sentence he says; "A law was likewise sent to the governors of the provinces to reverence the Lord's day." This seems to imply that he is speaking of what appertains to that festival. If this conjecture be just, it affords an easy solution to the subsequent chapter, 25, which presents a similar difficulty.

[f] Nicephorus, lib. vii. cap. 46, cited in Suicer, *Thesaur. Ecclesiast.* vol. ii. p. 1184.

derations of expediency, or from a conviction that it was agreeable to the apostolical doctrine. That the latter was the real motive seems evident from the piety of that monarch; for there is no reason for doubting, as Gibbon is inclined to do, the sincerity of his profession of Christianity; and, if he possessed any genuine piety, it would have revolted at the institution of a sabbath, had he known that the founders of his religion had abolished all distinction of days. Nor would his conduct in this particular have accorded with the political wisdom universally ascribed to him; as such a violation of the prejudices of the Pagans, and such a departure from the apostolical practice, would rather have retarded than advanced the progress of Christianity, the success of which he was so anxious to promote. He must, therefore, have believed that he was acting agreeably to the precepts and practice of the apostles, when he established by his imperial edicts the observance of the Lord's day; and it cannot be conceived that he was entirely mistaken in the matter. His laws respecting it were promulged but little more than 200 years after the death of the Apostles; the current of tradition was flowing in an uninterrupted and incorrupted stream; many writings and documents, now lost, were at that period accessible to every inquirer; and possibly the extraordinary operation of the Spirit had

not yet altogether ceased; from all which it may safely be inferred that Constantine, and the men of his council, were both acquainted with the practice of the immediate followers of our Lord, and acted conformably to it in giving a legal sanction to a weekly festival in the Christian church.

After this period the appropriation of sunday was fortified by the decrees of various councils, and by imperial laws, the chief of which may be seen in Suicer, Heylin, Bingham; and the due consecration of it was inculcated by the learned doctors of the church. The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries had access to numerous productions of a prior age, and to many records which have unfortunately perished; and they had so many valuable sources of information, that they cannot be supposed either to have been ignorant of the truth, or to have, one and all, intentionally misrepresented it; especially a truth so little liable to be mistaken as the religious observance of the first day of the week. Their testimony, then, is important; and, in the absence of any other, might be sufficient to decide the point at issue: but the evidence of the ante-Nicene church to the Christian sabbath, is so extensive and convincing, that additional witnesses are not required. A few testimonies, however, from the Fathers of the fourth and fifth

centuries shall be produced; for, though they are not needed to corroborate, they will at least shew their correspondency with those of the Fathers of earlier ages.

Athanasius, who flourished A.D. 326, in his Exposition of Psalm cxvii. 24. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," remarks: "What day can here be meant, but the day of our Lord's resurrection? What day but that which brought salvation to all nations, in which the stone that was rejected became the head of the corner? The expression signifies our Lord's resurrection-day, that which was entitled from him, that is to say, the Lord's day [g]." He condemns certain persons, Arians, "who did not reverence the sacred festival of the Lord's day [h]." In another place he says: "The sabbath was the end of the first creation, but the Lord's day the beginning of the second, when he renewed the old (creation.) Therefore, as he formerly ordered the sabbath day to be observed, in commemoration of the end of his first works, so we venerate the Lord's day as a commemoration of the beginning of his second, which were a renovation; for he did not make a new creation, but renewed the old one,

[g] Athanasius, vol. i. p. 1203. C. ed. Benedict, 3 vols. folio. Paris. 1698.

[h] *Epist. Encyclica*, vol. i. p. 115. B.

and perfected that which he had commenced[i]." "So also, (he observes,) we celebrate the Lord's day on account of the resurrection[k]; and again, "The Lord transferred the sabbath day to the Lord's day[l]."

Epiphanius, A.D. 368, makes mention of the Lord's day as an established festival[m]; and affirms that "this is the day which the Lord hath made; in it let us exult spiritually, and be glad with an holy joy. This is to us the chief of all the festivals. This is the day which the Lord blessed and sanctified, because in it he ceased from his works, having perfected the salvation both of those on the earth, and those under the earth; on this day he abrogated idolatrous rites, &c." and pro-

[i] *De Sabbato*, vol. ii. p. 57. D.

[k] *De Semente*, vol. ii. p. 64. D.

[l] *Ibid.* p. 60. A. There are doubts as to the genuineness both of this and of the Treatise *De Sabbato*.

[m] Epiphanius, *Hæres.* lib. iii. p. 823. D. 1104, et seq. edit. Colon. 1682. 2 vols. folio. In the latter of the passages here referred to, Epiphanius says, Συναξεις δε επιτελουμεναι ταχθεισαι εισιν απο των Αποστολων, τετραδι, και προσαββατω, και Κυριακη, (p. 1104, C.) which is thus rendered: "Sacri porro conventus, et Synaxes ab Apostolis instituti sunt his potissimum diebus: quarta, sextaque feria, et Dominica;" but I submit whether it would not be more correctly rendered, "The sacred assemblies instituted by the Apostles, are held on the, &c." At any rate, it is a testimony to the apostolical appointment of the Lord's day.

ceeds at some length in the same strain of eulogy [n].

Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, A.D. 370, in reference to the Lord's day, says, "it is the day when they ought to remain at home in memory of the resurrection [n]." He calls it "the first fruits of days, the day co-eval with light, the Lord's day, honoured by the resurrection of the Lord [o]." and he speaks of praying standing, and with their faces to the east, on that day as an apostolical tradition, which, though he accounts for it rather fancifully, proves that this day was employed in religious offices [p].

Gregory of Nyssa, who flourished A.D. 371., says, "The law commands us to keep a sabbath, or a rest from sinful works; for the scope of the two tables, of the Levitical ordinances, and of the laws in Deuteronomy is, that we may cease from those works the doing of which is sinful [q]." His name-sake of Nazianzum who flourished about the same period, calls the Lord's day "the holy and noted paschal feast," "the queen of days,"

[n] *Orat. in Resur. Christi.* vol. ii. p. 277. D.

[n] Basil, *Homil.* 14. *in Ebriosos*, vol. ii. p. 123. B. edit. Benedict. 3 vols. Fol. Paris 1721—30.

[o] *Hexæm. Homil.* 2. vol. i. p. 21. D.

[p] *De Spiritu Sancto.* cap. xxvii. V. 3. p. 56.

[q] Gregory Nyssen, *Homil.* 7 *in Eccles.* vol. i. p. 440. edit. Paris 1638. 3 vols. Fol.

and "the feast of feasts[r];" and he composed a discourse *in novum Dominicam*[s].

Ephrem the Syrian, A.D. 370. calls it "the festival of festivals, when Christ our passover was sacrificed; rather when the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world arose; for this is the Lord's day, and the queen of days[t]."

The eloquent Chrysostom, A.D. 398, says, "God hath from the beginning taught man to separate one entire day in the weekly revolution to spiritual exercises;" he also says, "the first day of the week is called the Lord's day, because on it our Lord returned from death unto life." And again he styles it, "the royal day, in which our Master and King ascended from the grave[u]."

About the same period lived Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, who asserts "that both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honour the Lord's day, and keep it as a festival, since on that day our Lord Jesus Christ completed his

[r] Gregory Nazianz. *Orat.* xix. vol. i. p. 304. A. Compare p. 305. c. *Orat.* xlii. p. 676. D. Compare p. 677. A. *Orat.* xliii. p. 700. A. et seq. Edit. Morell. 2 vols. Fol. Colon. 1690.

[s] Vol. i. p. 697. et seq.

[t] Ephrem Syrus, *Orat. in Crucem;* cited by Cotelerius, nota 63 in Epist. Interpol. Ignatii ad Magnes.

[u] Chrysostom, *Homil.* 10. *in Gen. in Psalm* 118.; *Homil.* 5. *de Resurrect.* For these references I am indebted to a Latin translation; not having access to the original.

resurrection from the dead, for which reason it is in the sacred Scriptures called the first day (of the week), as being the beginning of our life, and the eighth, as being the day after the Jewish sabbatical rest[x]." So much for the Greek fathers, with whom those of the Latin church are perfectly in union.

Hilary, Bishop of Poictiers, flourished about the year 354, and in making some observations upon the septenary and eighth number, he expressly mentions the Lord's day, adding, "though the name and observance of the sabbath were first appointed on the seventh day, yet we on the eighth day, which is also the first, rejoice with the joy of a true sabbath[y]."

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who flourished A. D. 374. frequently mentions the Lord's day[z]. After asserting that it is wrong to fast on the Lord's day when the resurrection of Christ is celebrated, he says, "the prophet teaches us to exult on the Lord's day, saying, This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it[a].

[x] *Edict. Theoph.* apud Balsam. in Synod. T. ii. P. 1. I translate from the citation in Bishop Pearson, *on the Creed*, vol. ii. p. 342.,

[y] *Prolog. in Psal.* p. 637. B. edit. Paris 1652. Fol.

[z] Ambrose, *Op.* Tom. iii. Serm. xv. p. 303. Serm. xxxiii. p. 326. Serm. xxxv. p. 330. Serm. xxxvii. p. 333. Serm. xliii. p. 341. *et al.* edit. Erasmus, Basil. 1527. 4 Tom. Fol.

[a] Ps. cxvii.

Therefore we ought to keep both the day of his passion, and the day of his resurrection, that we may have a day of bitterness, and a day of joy, in order that we may fast on the one, and be refreshed on the other[b]." Speaking of the Lord's day he says that "Jesus by his resurrection sanctified the eighth day, the same, that is the first day, which obtains prerogative from its numerical order, and its sanctity from the resurrection of our Lord[c]."

In the edition of the works of Ambrose which I use, and which is the only one I have an opportunity of consulting, there is the following passage: "The Lord's day is to us venerable and solemn, because on it our Saviour rose, like the rising sun, having dispelled the clouds of infernal darkness by the light of his resurrection; for which reason it is called sunday by the men of this world, because Christ the Sun of righteousness, having arisen, illuminates this world[d]." This, however, is commonly, and, perhaps, properly, ascribed to Maximus Taurinensis, who flourished about A.D. 420., and as such it is cited by Bishop Pearson and others[e]. As the ancient fa-

[b] *Epist.* 83. Tom. iii. p. 263.

[c] *Enar. in Psal.* 47. Tom. iv.

[d] *Serm.* lxi. Tom. iii. p. 363.

[e] Pearson, *On the Creed*, vol. ii. p. 344.; Heylin, *Hist. of the Sab.* P. 2. cap. i. p. 8.

thers were in the habit of quoting largely from their predecessors, it is sometimes difficult to assign passages and treatises to the proper author; but whether the passage just cited belong to Ambrose or Maximus, there is no doubt of its being very ancient, and therefore a valuable testimony to the sanctity of the first day of the week.

Towards the end of the fourth century flourished the pious and learned Jerome, for he died A.D. 420. He supplies much to our present purpose; but it will be sufficient to adduce a few testimonies from his works. "That the septenary number is sacred, says he, is proved by the sabbath on which God rested from all his works[f]." He remarks that "it may be said, if it is not allowed to observe days, and months, and times, and years, we fall into a similar crime by observing wednesday, and friday, and the Lord's day[g]." He says, "I wish we could always fast, as we read in the Acts that St. Paul and his fellow-believers did on the Pentecost, and the Lord's day[i]." He commends the Egyptian monks, "because they devoted the Lord's day to prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures[k];" and he also commends Paula,

[f] Jerome, *Comment. in Amos.* 5. vol. ii. p. 1407. edit. Martianay, 5 vols. Fol. Paris, 1693.

[g] Comment. in Gal. iv. 10. Vol. iv. p. 271.

[i] *Epist.* 52. ad L. Bœticum. vol. iv. P. 2. p. 579.

[k] *Epist. ad Eustochium.* vol. iv. P. 2. p. 46.

because she, and her companions, "repaired to the church on the Lord's day[l]." He says the Lord's day "is better than all other days, whether those which are accounted common, or those festivals, the solemn feasts, the new-moons, and the sabbaths, sanctioned by Moses in the Law[m]."

In another piece, which, however, is placed by Martianay among those writings which pass under the name of Jerome, but the genuineness of which is doubtful, he calls the Lord's day, "The day of his resurrection, and the day peculiarly belonging to Christians[n]."

The last authority to which appeal shall be made is Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo Regius in Africa, who died A.D. 430, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. He says "The resurrection of our Lord is to us the pledge of eternal day, and hath consecrated to us the Lord's day. That which is called the Lord's day properly belongs to the Lord, because he rose on that day[o]." Again, "We solemnly celebrate the Lord's day, the Paschal, and some other Christian festivals[p]." Also, "The Lord's day was made

[l] *Epist. ad Eustochium.* vol. iv. P. 2. p. 46.

[m] *Comment. in Mark*, cap. 16.

[n] *Explanat. in Psal.* 117. vol. v. p. 190.

[o] Augustine, *Serm. XV. de Verb. Apostol.* tom. x. fol. 63. 1. edit. Paris, 1631. in 10 tom. folio.

[p] *Contra Adimantum.* tom. vi. fol. 41. E.

known, not to Jews, but to Christians, by the resurrection of the Lord, from which it took its origin as a festival[q]." Again: "If a Jew by keeping holy the sabbath denies the Lord's day, how can a Christian observe the sabbath? Either let us be Christians and keep holy the Lord's day, or be Jews, and observe the sabbath; for no man can serve two masters[r]." Lastly: "The apostles and apostolical men, (i. e. men employed by Christ as apostles in preaching the gospel,) sanctioned the Lord's day by a religious solemnization, because on it our Redeemer rose from the dead. It is called the Lord's day for this reason, that, abstaining on it from secular works and worldly pleasures, we might solely attend to divine services; honouring and reverencing the day, for the hope of our own resurrection, which we have through that (of the Lord.) For as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead, so we hope to rise at the last day. Its solemnity, indeed, is apparent in the holy Scriptures, since it is the first day of the world; in it the elements of the world were made; in it the angels were created; in it Christ rose from the dead; in it the Holy Spirit descended from heaven upon the Apostles; in it manna was first rained down from

[q] *Epistola* 119. tom. ii. fol. 110. M.

[r] *Epistola* 86. *Ibid.*

heaven in the wilderness. By these circumstances the Lord's day is distinguished, and therefore the doctors of the Church have decreed that the honour belonging to the Jewish sabbath should be transferred to it, (i. e. the Lord's day,) so that we may celebrate in reality what the Jews did figuratively[s]."

It were a waste of time to descend lower, or to accumulate more testimonies from the fourth and fifth centuries, as it will scarcely be denied, that the Lord's day, during these ages, and ever afterwards, was kept by Christians as a sacred festival. But the great value of those which have now been produced, and of others to the same effect which might be appealed to, consists in this, that they in no small degree corroborate the evidence adduced from the ante-Nicene Fathers; both conspiring in friendly union, to evince that the first day of the week was especially devoted to religious purposes in all ages, from the very earliest, of the church; which universal practice cannot be supposed to have had its origin in any other than divine and apostolical authority. The force of this evidence is so great that those who reject the Lord's day as a SACRED institution employ

[s] *Serm.* 251, *de Tempore,* tom. x. fol. 238. K. Some doubt whether this Homily be the production of Augustine; a matter of small importance to this enquiry, as it is undoubtedly ancient.

every effort to diminish it; and, as there are some few passages in the works of these pious writers which appear at first sight, to wear a contrary aspect, the ante-sabbatarians have eagerly laid hold of them as favouring their opinion. But the multiplied and direct testimonies already produced are in their aggregate amount too strong to allow a doubt, that all passages which *seem* to oppose them must admit of an easy and unforced reconciliation. And such, upon a nearer inspection, will be found to be the fact; the contradiction is in appearance not in reality; in proof of which it may be well to add a few explanatory remarks which will serve both to place the testimony of the primitive fathers in a clear light, and to obviate some objections which have been made to it.

In the first place, it is asserted by some of the Christian doctors of the ancient church, that the sabbath is to be kept after a spiritual manner, which, it has been thought, implies the abolition of all distinction of days under the gospel economy. Ignatius says, "Let us not keep the sabbath after a Jewish manner, taking pleasure in idleness; for it is written, 'he that will not labour shall not eat,' and, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread;' but let each of us keep the sabbath spiritually, taking pleasure in the study of the law, rather than in the rest of the body,

admiring the works of God, not eating meats prepared yesterday, or drinking warm beverage, or walking a limited space, or delighting in dancing and senseless plaudits [t]." Cyril of Alexandria says, "We keep the sabbath spiritually in Christ, departing from sin, and ceasing from every corruptible and earthly work [u]." Justin Martyr observes, "If there is among you (Jews) any perjured person, or thief, let him leave off his wickedness; if any adulterer, let him repent; and he who does so keeps the true sabbaths of God [x]." Origen, after several observations tending to give a spiritual meaning to the offerings and festivals of the Jews, says, "He it is who ceases from secular works, and is at leisure for spiritual ones, that performs the sabbath sacrifice, and keeps the sabbath festival [y]." Macarius says, "God commanded in the Mosaic Law, that every one should rest on the sabbath day, which is a type and shadow of the true sabbath, given of the Lord to the soul. For the soul that is counted worthy,

[t] *Epist. Interpol. ad Magnes.* § 9. In mentioning the eating of meats dressed the day before, (ἔωλα) and drinking warm drinks, (χλιαρὰ) and walking within a certain space, (μεμετρημένα βαδίζων) he no doubt refers to the Pharisaic observances of the Sabbath.

[u] Apud Suicer, *Thesaur. Ecclesiast.* vol. ii. p. 919.

[x] *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 229. D.

[y] *Homil. 23 in Numer.* vol. ii. p. 358. E.

ceasing from shameful and sordid thoughts, both observes the true sabbath, and keeps the true rest, being freed from all the works of darkness;" and he adds more to the same effect [z]. Augustine frequently affirms that the sabbath is to be kept spiritually [a]. Irenæus says, "The sabbaths taught men to persevere in serving God throughout the whole day;" viz. during the whole of existence [b]; and Tertullian remarks, that, "The Scriptures designate a temporal sabbath, and an eternal one [c]."

A multitude of similar passages might be quoted from the writings of the Fathers [d]; but all such

[z] Macarius, *Homil.* 35. p. 191. D. edit. Paris, 1622. folio. The Greek is, καταξωθεῖσα ψυχὴ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσχρῶν καὶ ῥύπαρῶν λογισμῶν, καὶ ἀληθινὸν σάββατον σαββατίζει, καὶ ἀληθινήν ἀνάπαυσιν ἀναπαύεται, ἀργοῦσα καὶ ἐλευθερουμένη ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν σκοτεινῶν ἔργων: rendered by the Latin interpreter, "nam anima quæ liberari meruit ab obscœnis et sordidis cogitationibus, verum Sabbatum celebrat, et veram quietam requiescit, ocium agens et liberata a cunctis operibus tenebrosis." But I construe ἀργοῦσα with ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσχρῶν, &c. which makes the whole passage clear, and is confirmed by a subsequent clause, ἀνάπαυσις ἀληθινή ἐστι ψυχῆς ἀργοῦσης καὶ καθαριζομένης ἀπὸ τῶν διαλογισμῶν τοῦ Σατανᾶ, or some word in that sense, may be understood in the first clause, rendering the last, "ceasing and being freed from the works of darkness."

[a] See index to his works in "Sabbatum Christianorum."

[b] *Hæres.* lib. iv. cap. xxx.

[c] *Adversus Judæos.* § 4. p. 186. D.

[d] As for instance, Chrysostom, *Homil.* 39. *in Matt.* xii.;

declarations are perfectly consistent with a firm belief in the divine appropriation of one day in seven to religion; for they only amount to this, that the Christian sabbath, according to the spiritual law of Christianity, must be kept in a spiritual way; which is a truth universally allowed. The outward observance of the Lord's day will avail nothing, except it be also consecrated by a pure and spiritual service. The most punctual attention to the external rite is altogether worthless, if unaccompanied with sincerity of heart; he therefore alone truly keeps the sabbath who keeps it spiritually, with full devotion of soul. That this is the meaning of the passages just cited, and of others to the like purpose, appears from the circumstance, that the same fathers maintain, in explicit terms, the obligation of a weekly festival, as has been abundantly shewn by the preceding extracts from their writings; and of course their declarations that the sabbath is to be observed in a spiritual manner must be consistent with that doctrine.

The primitive fathers assert that we are to

Gregory Nyssen, *Homil. 7 in Eccles.* vol. i. p. 440; Theophylact *in John*, cap. v.; Ambrose, *Comment. in Lucam*, cap. xiii. tom. iv.; Jerome, *Comment. in Isa.* cap. lviii. vol. iii. p. 435.; Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 30. vol. i. p. 159. B. et seq. *Hæres.* 66. p. 795. B. C.; Athanasius, *De Sabbato*, vol. ii. p. 57. B.; Clemens Alexand. *Stromat.* 7. p. 744. C.

worship God not by a mere hebdomadal service, but continually, not on one day in the week alone, but at all times, which has been supposed irreconcileable with the notion of a sabbath. Thus, Justin Martyr says, "The new law demands the observance of a perpetual sabbath[d]." Clemens Alexandrinus says, "We are commanded to worship and honour him whom we believe to be the Word, the Saviour, and Captain, and through him the Father, not on selected days, as some do, but continually through our whole lives, and in every manner. Truly the royal Prophet declares, 'Seven times a day have I praised thee,' being justified by the commandment. Hence, he who has knowledge, (γνωστικὸς, i. e. the Christian,) honours God, that is, is grateful for the knowledge of the right way of life, not in one determinate place or chosen temple, nor on certain festivals or appointed days, but throughout his whole life, every place, whether he be alone, or be joined by others of the same faith. — Making our whole life, therefore, a festival, and persuaded that God is every where present, we praise him while labouring in the field, we praise him while sailing on the seas; and in every situation of life we conduct ourselves the same way[f]." A few pages

[d] *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 229. C.

[f] *Stromat.* 7. p. 719. C. D.

afterwards he asserts, that "every place is truly sacred, in which we receive the knowledge of God, and every time when we do the same[g]." We ought to keep the sabbath, says Tertullian, "not only on every seventh day, but at all times, (per omne tempus)[h]." Origen says, "Tell me, ye who frequent the church on festival days alone, are not all days festivals? Are they not all the Lord's? It belongs to the Jews to observe certain solemn days. Hence God says to them, 'Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them[i].' God therefore abhors those who believe one day (only) to be the festival of the Lord. Christians every day eat the flesh of the Lamb, that is, they daily take of the flesh of the Word of God, (i. e. in the holy sacrament[k].)" Jerome also declares, "that all days are equal; that Christ was not only crucified on the friday, and rose again only on the Lord's

[g] *Stromat.* 7. p. 724, A.

[h] *Adversus Judæos*, § 4. p. 186, D.

[i] Isa. i. 13, 14.

[k] *Homil.* 10 *in Gen.* vol. ii. p. 88, C. Compare *Homil.* 23 *in Numer.* § 3. vol. ii. p. 358, E.; *Contra Celsum*, lib. viii. § 23.

day, but that every day is the holy day of his resurrection, and that at all times the Lord's body may be eaten (in the sacrament.) But fasts and assemblies on certain days were constituted by men of prudence, on account of those who are more devoted to the world than to God, and who are neither able nor willing to assemble in the church continually [1]."

These passages, though by far the strongest that I have met with in the ancient Fathers, are by no means hostile to the observance of a Christian sabbath. The context, of which they form a part, plainly shews that they are directed against those who confine their religion to certain times and seasons. In opposition to such, these venerable fathers affirm, that we must cherish an abiding sense of religion, that we must not only worship the Creator on certain days, but preserve a continual reverence of him in the mind, and that, by retaining an unceasing, operative principle of piety in the heart, every day may be made, as it were, a Christian festival. In this all sincere Christians will coincide, while they strenuously support the obligation of a weekly holy day. Our faith is not merely to be exhibited at certain times,

[1] *Comment. in Gal.* cap. iv. vol. iv. p. 272. Jerome, it is possible, is here stating the allegation of an objector, not his own opinion: but compare Comment. in Isa. cap. lviii. vol. iii. p. 435.

and in certain places; it should become an ever-active principle, pervading the whole heart, and influencing every thought, word, and deed, from its first implantation in the soul, to the termination of life; yet the sabbatical institution is needful as well for the culture and advancement of the religious principle, as for offering the incense of public praise and thanksgiving to the Deity. Not only are they reconcileable, but mutually friendly to each other; the Lord's day does not prevent the daily secret worship, and unceasing veneration of God, nor does this militate against the appropriation of the Lord's day to his more immediate service. If it be culpable to confine our religion to particular seasons, it is equally so to contemn the seasons set apart for its specific cultivation. And this is the doctrine of the fathers: while they hold the necessity of keeping the seventh day holy, they constantly declare that our religion must not be limited to that portion of time, but that every day should be sanctified by those sentiments, dispositions, and devout habits which are required by the Christian profession.

Again, it is frequently asserted by the fathers, that the sabbath is an institution peculiar to the Jews; that it was to be abolished; and that its observance is unnecessary under the Christian law of liberty. Justin Martyr says: "We should

have kept the circumcision in the flesh, the sabbaths, and all the festivals, unless we had known for what cause they were commanded you, (i. e. the Jews,) namely, for your iniquity and hardness of heart[m]." And he proceeds to argue that these ordinances were necessary to the Jews, but not now to Christians. Speaking of the Levitical rites, he declares them unnecessary to salvation; "For, (says he,) unless we confess this, we shall fall into the absurd notion, that the God of the Jews was not the God of Enoch, and others in those times, who were not circumcised, nor kept the Sabbath, nor the rest of the Mosaic institutions[n]." Again, "for if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, nor of the observation of the sabbath, nor of festivals, nor of offerings before Moses, neither is there now need of them after Jesus Christ the Son of God was born, according to the counsel of God, without sin, of a virgin, of the race of Abraham[o]." "The Gentiles who believe in Christ, and repent of their sins, shall inherit together with the patriarchs, and prophets, and righteous persons descended from Jacob: although they neither observe the sabbath, nor are circumcised, nor keep the festivals, they shall obtain the holy inheritance of

[m] *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 235, E.
[n] *Ibid.* p. 240. E.
[o] *Ibid.* p. 241. B.

God [p]." Irenæus asserts that the keeping of the Sabbath, and other Mosaic ordinances, cannot justify a man [q]; and Tertullian argues that the Sabbath was not an eternal and spiritual institution, but a temporary one [r]. Origen likewise reasons upon the assumption that the sabbath was no longer obligatory after the coming of Christ [s]; and similar sentiments are proclaimed by most of the ancient fathers, to some of whom, as it would be tedious to cite them, I refer in the margin [t].

But all the declarations of this kind, it is to be observed, have reference to the JEWISH SABBATH,

[p] *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 243. C.

[q] *Advers. Hæres*, lib. iv. cap. xxx.

[r] *Advers. Judæos*, § 4. p. 186, 187. Also *ibid.* § 6. p. 188; and *De Idololatria*, § 14. p. 94, A. Compare *Advers. Marcionem*, lib. iv. § 11—13.

[s] *Homil.* 7 *in Exod.* § 5. p. 154.; *Homil.* 10 *in Gen.* § 3. p. 88.; *Homil.* 23 *in Numer.* § 4. p. 358.

[t] Athanasius, *De Sabbato*, (if it be his,) written to shew the abrogation of the Sabbath; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. i. cap. iv.; Ambrose, *Epist.* 39 and 72, in tom. ii.; *in Lucam*, cap. iii. tom. iv. *et al.*; Epiphanius, lib. i. *Hæres.* 30 and 66; Jerome, *Prefat. in Gal. Comment. in Ezek.* cap. xliv.; Augustine, *De Spirit et Lit. ad Marcel.* cap. xiv. and often in other places; Basil, *Epist.* 74; *Cyril Hierosol.* Catechesis 4. p. 68; Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxi.; Macarius, *Homil.* 35; Gregory Nyssen, *Orat.* 1 *de Resurrect.*; Theodoret, *Comment. in Ezek.* cap. xx. et *in Gal.* cap. iv.; Victorine, *De Fabrica Cœli*, apud Routh, *Reliq. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 237.

and they only amount to this, that so far as the sabbath was a Levitical institution, it is no longer binding upon Christians; a position to which the most strenuous advocates of the Christian weekly festival will instantly and cheerfully accede. The truth of this observation is demonstrated, *first*, by the concurring attestation of the fathers to the obligation of a septenary festival under the Gospel; and, *secondly*, by their contrasting, in many of the passages referred to, the Jewish festival on the seventh day, with the Christian festival on the first, or, as they frequently call it, the eighth day of the week. These circumstances clearly prove that these learned and venerable men, in speaking of the abolition of the sabbath, refer solely to it as it constituted a part of the Mosaic dispensation. They would not palpably contradict themselves; and, as they asserted the duty of consecrating a weekly day to religion, they must, when mentioning the abrogation of the sabbath, have meant that the Levitical ordinance of the sabbath was no longer in force. This might be further confirmed by certain expressions and circumstances in the passages appealed to; but a more particular examination may be waved, as the general observations just now made are applicable to them all, and at the same time completely rebut the force of the objection.

In speaking of the hebdomadal festival under the Christian law, it is not the usual language of the Fathers to call it the sabbath, but the Lord's day, or the first, and sometimes the eighth day of the week. They seem desirous, by the distinction of the names, to preserve the distinction between the two festivals. In numbering the days of the septenary cycle, they call saturday the sabbath, and sunday, generally, the Lord's day, by which they designated the day which was consecrated to his service from the apostolic age. By the sabbath they signified the Mosaic institution, which, it is acknowledged, is abolished by Christ. Sometimes, indeed, they used the appellation "sabbath," to denote the spiritual and mystical sabbath, typified by the Levitical sabbath, and which was most commonly regarded by them as a representation of the heavenly rest of the redeemed; though occasionally they treat it as adumbrative of the spiritual blessings under the reign of the Messiah. But they were careful not to confound the different appellations, which is another strong argument, that, whenever they speak disparagingly of the sabbath, they did it in reference to the Jewish ordinance of keeping the *seventh* day holy.

It may be objected to the testimony derived from the concurrence of antiquity, that, in the early ages of Christianity, the last day of the

week, or saturday, was observed as a sabbath, together with the first day of the week, or sunday; and by consequence the authority of the primitive church cannot be pleaded in favour of the one more than of the other. This objection is the more imposing, as it confessedly has some foundation in truth[u]. Next to the Lord's day some of the ancient Christians were careful to observe the seventh day, which was the Jewish sabbath; and in many parts, particularly in the East, honoured it with the public services of religion. This custom is accounted for by the learned Dr. Cave, from the circumstance: "The Gospel in those parts mainly prevailing amongst the Jews, they being generally the first converts to the Christian faith, they still maintained a mighty reverence for the Mosaic institutions, and especially for the sabbath, as that which had been appointed by God himself, (as the memorial of his rest from the work of creation,) settled by their great master Moses, and celebrated by their ancestors for so many ages, as the solemn day of

[u] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, P. 1. cap. vii.; Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, lib. xx. cap. iii.; Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath*, P. 2. cap. ii.; Lardner, *Credibility*, cap. lxxxv.; Curcellæus, *De Esu Sanguinis*, cap. vi.; Albaspinæus, *Observat. de Vet. Eccles. Ritibus*, lib. i. cap. xiii. See also Böhmer, *Diss. de Statu Christianorum Die.*; and the Ecclesiastical historians.

their public worship, and were therefore very loth that it should be wholly antiquated and laid aside. For this reason it seemed good to the prudence of those times, (as in others of the Jewish rites, so in this,) to indulge the humour of that people, and to keep the Sabbath as a day for religious offices." This valuable writer, and others named in the margin, further assert, that in the Oriental church the seventh day was kept as a festival, but in the Roman, and some of the Latin churches, as a fast; yet that in both it was singled out as a day for religious solemnization.

This, it is acknowledged, appears to cast a shade of doubt over the evidence of the ancient church. It does not, it is true, in the least shake the fact that the first day of the week was observed as a sacred festival by the primitive Christians; but if they likewise observed the seventh day, it cannot be inferred from their practice, whether one or both of these days were appointed by the immediate disciples of Christ. If, moreover, they were so far mistaken as to keep two days holy, for which there is no authority in the sacred Scriptures, they can scarcely be credible witnesses to the apostolical doctrine and practice. Such is the unavoidable inference, supposing that saturday and sunday were observed as festivals universally in the ancient church; and it must be allowed to be more formidable than

any of the objections before noticed; but the following observations, it is hoped, will shew that although it has some foundation in truth, it is not true to the extent sufficient to warrant the conclusion.

In the *first* place, the religious observance of the seventh day does not appear to have obtained in the earliest and purest ages of the Christian church. No countenance is given to it by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, or in the writings of any of the ante-Nicene Fathers; nor do I find any satisfactory evidence of its having prevailed in the second century, or, to any considerable extent, in the third. It is, indeed mentioned in a passage already cited from the large Epistles of Ignatius[x]; but though the opposition there noted between the Christian and Jewish modes of keeping the sabbath may seem to lead to a contrary conclusion; I think the fair interpretation does not sanction the observance of the seventh day. These epistles, however, are generally reckoned to be interpolated, while in the shorter and more genuine epistles nothing of the kind occurs. The apostolical constitutions ordain that Christians should assemble for public worship on the sabbath, and on the Lord's day, on which Christ arose from the dead; that

[x] See *ante*. p. 323.

these two days should be kept as festivals; that every sabbath in the year, except one, should be kept, not as a fast, but with joy and gladness; and that servants should cease from labour, and resort to the church on that day [y]. But the authority of the constitutions in regard to the customs of the first three centuries, is extremely small, as they are clearly pseudepigraphal, forged, as is most probable, in the latter part of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century [z].

The principal writers in the post-Nicene ages, to whom appeal has been made in proof of the ancient practice of keeping the seventh day sabbath, are Athanasius, Epiphanius, Basil, Cassian, Socrates, Sozomen, the council of Laodicea, and Theodore Balsamon. Of these the first declares, that "They met on the sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, for they regarded not false sabbaths, but to worship Jesus the Lord of the sabbath." Though here is an acknow-

[y] *Constitut. Apostol.* lib. ii. cap. lix.; lib. v. cap. xv. xx.; lib. vii. cap. xxiii. xxxvi.: lib. viii. cap. xxxiii.

[z] Turner, *Discourse on the pretended Apostolical Constitutions;* 8vo. London, 1715; Dalæus, *De Pseudepigraphis Apostolicis,* 12mo. Hardevic, 1653; Lardner, *Credibility,* cap. lxxxv.; Cotelerius, *Judicium de Const. Apostol.*; Le Clerc, *Diss. de Constit. Apostol.* in ed Patrum Apost.; Jortin, *Discourses on the Christian Religion,* Disc. 6; and, *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. i.

ledgment of religious assemblies on the sabbath day, yet the expressions themselves imply, that Athanasius did not consider it to be binding upon Christians; which is further confirmed by his immediately adding,—"With the ancients the sabbath was held in estimation, but the Lord hath transferred the sabbath day into the Lord's day. We do not derogate from the sabbath by our own authority; it is the prophet who hath rejected it, Isa. i. 13, &c.[a]" Epiphanius merely states that, "In some places religious assemblies were held on the sabbath days;" but as to how far the custom prevailed, and when it took its rise, he is altogether silent[b]. Basil only says that the saturday was one of the days on which, in his time, the communion was administered; and Cassian, as cited by Bingham, is not free from ambiguity[c]. The ecclesiastical historians, Socrates and Sozomen, supply more important testimonies. The former says, "The churches throughout the world celebrated the mysteries (i. e. the communion) every week, on the sabbath day, except those in Alexandria and Rome, which, following their ancient traditions, did not adopt that cus-

[a] *Homil. de Semente*, vol. ii. p. 60, A. It is very doubtful whether this be the work of Athanasius.

[b] Epiphanius, *Epitom.* vol. ii. p. 1107, C.

[c] Basil, *Epist.* 289; Cassian apud Bingham, *Antiquities*, lib. xiii. cap. ix. § 3.

tom;" and in another place, speaking of the churches of Constantinople in the time of Chrysostom, he mentions the sabbath and the Lord's day, as the two weekly festivals, on which they always held religious assemblies[d]. Sozomen, about the same time, says, "The Christians assembled on the sabbath, in like manner as on the first day of the week, in Constantinople, and almost every where, except in Rome and Alexandria[e]." The Council of Laodicea certainly acknowledges both days as festivals; and Balsamon, as quoted by Curcellæus, says, that "by the holy Fathers the sabbaths are almost equalled with the Lord's days[f]."

Some other testimonies have been brought forward[g], but these are the principal; and it is obvious to remark that the authors, in speaking of the consecration of the seventh day, refer solely to the practice of their own times, when, it is confessed, it was in some places kept as a religious

[d] Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxii.; lib. vi. cap. viii.

[e] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. vii. cap. xix.

[f] *Concil. Laod.* Canon 16, 49, 51; Balsamon apud Curcellæus, *De Esu Sang.* cap. vi. p. 959.

[g] As for instance, Gregory Nyssen, Asterius, Anastasius, Nicænus, Augustine, Timothy of Alexandria, Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. xviii. (See Bingham and Curcellæus.) The passage in Eusebius has been noticed in a former part of this chapter. See *ante.* p. 307.

festival by the Christians. But this practice was confined within narrow limits, as appears from the citations in the preceding paragraph. Epiphanius says that it prevailed only "in some places;" and both Socrates and Sozomen expressly exempt the churches in Rome and Alexandria. More anciently, as is evident from Pliny's letter to Trajan, the churches in Bithynia had only one stated day for the celebration of public worship. If, then, the sabbath was not observed, along with the Lord's day, by the churches in the province of Bithynia, and in the patriarchates of Rome and Alexandria, this will include a large proportion of the then Christian world. If the historians' meaning be limited to the cities of Rome and Alexandria, for which, however, there is no just reason, it implies, at all events, considerable exceptions to the universality of the custom. From the representations of Cave, and Bingham, and Curcellæus, and Albaspinæus, one might suppose the practice to have been every where adopted; whereas the very references alleged prove the contrary. So far, then, from being an universal practice, it MUST have been partial; and the authorities cited, as well as the very general silence of the Latin Fathers, lead us to believe that it prevailed chiefly in the eastern parts of the Roman empire.

It is also observable, that none of the writers

who have adverted to this custom, give us any reason for believing that it had existed for any great length of time. They say not a word as to its antiquity, and the way in which they mention it leads us to suppose that it grew up by degrees. It probably was adopted in the very earliest ages of Christianity, by certain churches in accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews; and the truth seems to be, as stated by Mosheim, that "the seventh day of the week was observed as a festival, not by the Christians in general, but by such churches only as were principally composed of Jewish converts, nor did the other Christians censure this conduct as criminal and unlawful[h]." Such a compliance with existing sentiments and feelings, has been approved by many in a more recent age, as by Curcellæus, who thinks that Christians of later times would have acted more wisely if they had retained the Sabbath, together with the Lord's day, in order to conciliate the Jews; not that it would be well *now* to resort to it, as such a proceeding would create confusion in the church, but that it would have been better not to have alienated the Hebrew people by its abrogation. The custom, however, of keeping both days, rose up by degrees, adopted in different places, as circumstances rendered it expedient;

[h] *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. I. P. 2. cap. iv. § 4. Maclaine's Translation.

and there is no evidence to prove that it was general in any period, or that it ever prevailed to any great extent in the Christian world [1].

[1] I beg leave to strengthen these remarks by the authority of a few writers distinguished for their accurate acquaintance with ecclesiastical antiquities. "Consuetudo (i. e. Sabbati observatio) interim ista per aliquod temporis spatium in Ecclesia, præsertim orientali, permansit, ut sabbatho quoque aliquid solemnitatis tribueretur." (Buddeus, *Ecclesia Apostolica*, cap. vii. p. 818.) "In quibusdam regionibus, sacra etiam erat dies Sabbati, vel. Feria VII. initio quidem, ut videtur, in gratiam Judæorum, et cum his sanctificata, nunc jam vero in memoriam sepulturæ Christi concelebrata." (Jablonski, *Instit. Hist. Christianæ*. Secul. 2. cap. i. § 8.) "Scimus certe, præter diem dominicum, etiam Sabbatum quibusdam festum fuisse;" and again, "Die primo hebdomadis omnes, alii præterea septimo, quidam et quarto, (quia illo Christus in ostium potestatem traditus fuit) et sexto, (quo in cruce mortuus,) solebant sacris operari." (Semler, *Hist. Eccles. Selecta Capita*, Secul. 2. cap. iii.; *Commentarii de Antiq. Christianorum Statu*. Secul. 2. § 47.) "It does not appear that the practice mentioned by Socrates and Sozomen of assembling on the Sabbath, obtained in the early days of Christianity. Nor was it universal in their time, as it would have been, in all probability, if it had been of Apostolical appointment." (Lardner, *Credibility*, cap. lxxxv. vol. ii. p. 433, edit. 4to.) Mosheim, besides the passage cited above, says, in reference to the second century, "Their meetings were on the first day of the week, and in some places, they assembled also on the seventh, which was celebrated by the Jews." (*Hist.* Cent. II. P. 2. cap. iv. § 8.) Milner, in his *History of the Church of Christ*, does not advert to this subject; but if he had, his work is perhaps too partial and too superficial to be appealed to on questions of Christian archæology. Petavius, in reference to

In the *second* place, those churches which adopted the practice of keeping both days, manifested, by the rites and ceremonies used, a preference of the Lord's day above the sabbath. For, as the indefatigable Bingham states, "*first*, we find no ecclesiastical laws obliging men to pray standing on the sabbath. For that was a ceremony peculiar to the Lord's day, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection. Nor, *secondly*, are there any imperial laws forbidding law-suits and pleadings on this day. Nor, *thirdly*, any laws prohibiting the public shows and games, as on the Lord's day. Nor, *fourthly*, any laws obliging men to abstain wholly from bodily labour[k]." All these circumstances clearly shew that they did not consider the sabbath as equally sacred with the sunday. With some of the primitive Christians it was usual to distinguish the wednesday and friday in each week by religious observances[l]; but, though they deemed it expedient to assemble

Sozomen's account of the saturday sabbath, says, "Ita non Orientis modo, sed totius orbis consuetudinem fuisse scribit; quod ego verum non arbitror. Fuit enim Orientis fere solius." (*Animadvers. in Epiphan.* vol. ii. p. 353.)

[k] *Antiquities*, lib. xx. cap. iii. § 3.

[l] Bingham, *Antiquities*, lib. xiii. cap. ix. § 2.; Mosheim, *Eccles. History*, Cent. II. P. 2. cap. iv. § 8.; Jablonski and Sember, as cited in the preceding note; Beveridge, *Cod. canon. vind. et illustrat.* lib. iii. cap. x.

for religious offices on these days, they never regarded them as of divine appointment, like the first day of the week. In the same light they regarded the saturday; for, while they thought it expedient, particularly in compliance with Jewish prejudices, to assemble on it for sacred purposes, they in other respects held it as the rest of the working days, abstaining from their worldly callings only as far as was necessary for attendance on divine service in the church.

Lastly, The believers who kept the seventh day of the week as a festival, while they did it partly in deference to the Jewish converts, nevertheless observed it, not in a Jewish, but a Christian way. The author of the interpolated Epistles of Ignatius says, that the sabbath was not to be kept after a Jewish manner [m]; Athanasius declares that they met on the sabbath not with a view to Judaize, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the sabbath [n]. The Council of Laodicea, A.D. 361, anathematizes those who taught the necessity of keeping the sabbath as a day of entire rest with the Jews [o]; and the Ebionites and other heretics were condemned for joining the observation of the sabbath, according to the law of the Jews,

[m] *Epist. ad Magnes.* § 9.

[n] *Homil. de Semente*, vol. ii. p. 60. A.

[o] *Canon*, xxix.

with the observation of the Lord's day [p]. The learned doctors of those ages knew well, and constantly held, that the Jewish sabbath was abrogated; and those who devoted it to religious purposes, like those who kept the wednesday and friday, never considered it as a divine institution, binding upon Christians. No contradiction, therefore, exists between the doctrine and practice of the primitive believers, between their observance of the seventh day of the week, and their openly professed conviction that our Saviour has abolished all the Jewish holy days. Though in some places they kept the sabbath with a certain degree of sacredness, they never considered it a point of doctrinal necessity, while they resolutely opposed every thing which they deemed to be Judaizing. They uniformly gave a preference to the Lord's day, which they regarded as the sole weekly festival obligatory by the Christian law. The observation of the seventh day they vindicated from motives of expediency, but held the sanctification of sunday to be a religious obligation.

From these remarks it is clear that the custom of keeping the seventh day of the week as a festival, though it probably took its rise in the earliest

[p] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xxvii.; Nicephorus, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. xiii.; Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 30.

ages of Christianity, was but partially received till some centuries afterwards; that so far from being universal, it prevailed chiefly in the eastern empire; and that where it was adopted, it was from such motives, and was attended with such rites and ceremonies, as designated it to be, in their estimation, of subordinate authority to the sacredness of the Lord's day. This was regarded as a divine and apostolical institution, while the former was an ordinance of some particular churches, partly out of deference to the opinions of the Jewish converts, and partly from that proneness to ritual observances and superstitious practices with which the faith of Christ was but too soon encumbered. A pharisaic and puritanical spirit was early in operation, a spirit which represented useless rigour and austerity as virtue, which presumed to win the favour of the Deity by observances and practices unauthorized in his revealed Word, and which has, more or less, in all ages of the church, produced "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife," a stern, forbidding temper within, and an uncharitable disposition towards others, to the great and lamentable perversion of the pure religion of Jesus. To this spirit is mainly attributable that multiplication of fasts and festivals, of mortifications and penances, of rites and ceremonies, of the long train of inventions by which bigotry and enthusiasm have

in all periods essayed to climb into heaven. The observance of the saturday sabbath by Christians, originated, no doubt, in prudential motives; but as little doubt can there be, that at length it participated of the pharisaic and self-righteous spirit which aims at salvation by a road different from that pointed out in the sacred writings.

Be this as it may, the practice of which I am speaking does not lessen the authority of the primitive church in favour of the septenary festival. Neither is that authority at all diminished by any of the objections which have now been examined; and hence we may rest, without any hesitation, in the inference that the consecration of one day in the week is sanctioned by the practice of the church in uninterrupted continuance from the time of the apostles.

Highly valuable is this attestation, since it goes far to prove the sacred appointment of the Lord's day; for to what other origin can so universal a practice be ascribed? Reason demands the dedication of some portion of our time to God; with believers in revelation a seventh part may be peculiarly proper, as commemorative of the creation of the universe; yet, as the adoption of one particular day in the week is no natural dictate, it is most reasonable to refer it to some positive injunction, human or divine. Those who assert that all distinction of days is abolished under the

gospel, of course consider the Lord's day as a mere ecclesiastical institution, resting on the authority of the church, not on any precept of Christ or his apostles. But this position is wholly subverted by several of the testimonies before adduced, which declare that our Lord sanctified the first day of the week by his resurrection, and that it was appointed a festival by the primitive teachers of Christianity. This is an indisputable fact; and it evinces, that in the judgment of the ancient fathers, a divine origin is to be ascribed to the Christian sabbath.

But the argument in this chapter does not rest so much upon the express declarations of the fathers, as upon the uniform and undeviating practice of believers from the apostolic age. This practice could not have sprung from any legislative enactment, while the sceptre of the world was swayed by Pagan hands; neither could it be enjoined by ecclesiastical authority, separated as the different churches were from each other by distance, manners, and languages. While they continued mutually independent, yet all destitute alike of temporal power, it cannot be conceived that they would entertain the absurd project of establishing an institution which, in those ages of Christianity, they had no power to enforce. Nor can it be supposed that the governors of the nascent church would of themselves, without any

divine sanction, institute a festival, which, by interfering, as it must, with the civil obligations of the converts, would have inflamed the hostility of their numerous and potent enemies, who were ever on the alert for grounds of accusation. They were not so devoid of prudence as to alarm the Pagans by an infringement of their civil rights, the effect of which must have been to expose the faithful to reproach and persecution, and to augment the obstacles to the propagation of the gospel. Besides, the practice prevailed long previous to any general council subsequent to the apostolic age, and no council ever pretended to the first establishment of it; which confirms its sacred derivation, according to the sound rule of Augustine, that, "whatever the universal church holds, and has always held, without being instituted by councils, must be accounted to be derived from apostolical authority [q]." No authority, independently of theirs, was sufficiently early and extensive and commanding, to give rise to the universal

[q] "Quod universa tenet Ecclesia, nec conciliis institutum, sed semper retentum est, non nisi auctoritate Apostolica traditum rectissime creditur." Augustine, *Contra Donatistas*, lib. iv. cap. xxiii. This is the general voice of the fathers: see Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.* lib. iii. cap. iv.; Tertullian, *De Præscript.* § 21.; Clemens Alexand. *Stromat.* 7. p. 755, B. p. 757, A. p. 764, B. D.; Origen, *De Principiis*, lib. i. Procem.; Ruffinus, *Præfat. in Origen De Princip.* lib. iii.; Vincentius Lirinens. *Adv. Hæres.* cap. ii. et seq.

sanctification of the Lord's day. The heathens, who held the reins of empire, *would* not sanction it; the rulers in the church *could* not; it must therefore have been by common consent; a consent so general and unanimous as could have no other origin than a conviction of its being ordained by Christ and the apostles. It was a matter respecting which the early Christians could not be mistaken, and how is it possible for all the churches throughout the Christian world to have agreed, even from the beginning of their plantation, to make the first day of the week a festival, unless they had been directed by the founders of their religion? Hence, as it has been shewn by evidence which cannot, in fairness, be disputed, that the consecration of a septenary day was the universal practice by the orthodox in the best and purest ages of the church, it must have originated in divine appointment, which proves the perpetual sanctity and obligation of a weekly religious festival.

CHAPTER VI.

Inquiry into the Duties of the Sabbath.

We are now arrived at that stage of our inquiry, from which many, who have travelled together in unanimity, have diverged into very opposite directions. In the ample and spacious field which opens to the view, we shall be liable, without the utmost caution, though treading upon firm ground, to be led astray into wandering and devious paths. Resting upon the previously established conclusion, that it is a bounden duty, ratified by the scriptures, and by the practice of the Christian church from the earliest ages, to dedicate every seventh day to the service of Him in whom we live and move, and have our being, it still remains to undertake the difficult investigation of the mode in which this homage is to paid. The holy solemnization of one day in the week, though admitted to be incumbent upon believers in the gospel, is a subject which has given birth to a wide contrariety of opinion; it being prescribed, on the one hand,

with a laxity which loosens, if not entirely dissolves, its religious obligation; and on the other, with a rigid austerity scarcely practicable, and certainly but ill-adapted to the present constitution of human nature. To draw the necessary line of distinction requires the prudent exercise of a chastised judgment; and, had the plan of this inquiry admitted it, the author would gladly have avoided an attempt, to the execution of which he is far from presuming himself to be fully competent.

In entering upon this task, it is impossible not to feel the greater hesitation and diffidence, as the sacred Scriptures furnish us with but little *direct* and *particular* information. To legislate minutely on any particular branch of moral and religious conduct, on which the Almighty has not promulged his revealed will, is often presumptuous, and not unfrequently mischievous. If we hold the fundamental truth of Protestantism, the sufficiency of Holy Writ, correctly interpreted, in matters of faith, to enjoin aught as a religious duty which is not *written there,* must be at least a dangerous experiment. It is especially so in regard to the external duties of our sacred vocation, as an error here has a natural tendency to induce weak, but well-disposed minds, to depend too much upon ceremonial observances. What has contributed more to sully and obscure

the pure spirit of religion, than the immoderate introduction of unauthorized rites and ceremonies? External ceremonies are more easily performed than the internal purification of the heart; for which reason the former are apt to be substituted for the latter; and if this inherent propensity of the mind be pampered by those who minister in sacred things, outward ordinances will assume an importance in the eyes of the people, to which they are not justly entitled. The utmost vigilance should be used against stamping that which is ritual, with the same degree of sacredness as that which is essential in religion; otherwise the end, however important, will be lost sight of, in a too fond attention to the means. To a want of care of this kind is to be attributed the regard and value which the Pharisees attached to their traditionary prescriptions, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law; and awful, yet useful, is the example of the church in the middle ages, during which, tradition assuming a paramount authority to Scripture, Christianity, pure, spiritual, vital Christianity, degenerated into a religion of parade and ceremony.

In recommending a vigilant caution in matters upon which the sacred Scriptures are silent, it is not intended to deny the necessity of external ordinances. In all social religion they are requisite; and every church has authority to decree

such rites and ceremonies as are deemed expedient, provided nothing be ordained contrary to the word of God. The disputatious puritanical opposition to such ceremonies as common sense must pronounce to be at least harmless, is now happily almost extinct; yet in a recent publication it is asserted, that "Nothing can more strongly depict the weakness and folly of mankind, than the assumption of the right to publish laws for the regulation of his (God's) worship, in cases where He himself has chosen to be silent; and to punish their fellow men for non-compliance with them, without the shadow of a proof of a divine warrant to substantiate the transgression, or inflict the penalty[a]." But public worship being impossible without published laws for its regulation, and none being delivered in the volume of Revelation, the duty of enacting them devolves of necessity upon the supreme governors of the church. As the Almighty has given few directions concerning some of those external performances which he requires, it must clearly be his sovereign will to leave such matters to the general power with which he has invested the church; and he cannot be wholly free from a schismatical spirit who refuses submission to what is justified by necessity, and recommended by expediency.

[a] Macbeth, *Dissertation on the Sabbath*, p. 166.

It has been shewn before, that the mode of computing the seventh day is left to human decision; and there are many other circumstances indispensable to the holy solemnization of it, for which we have no divine or apostolical prescription. Being mutable in their nature, and requiring to be modified according to the various habits of various regions, they are to be ordained by each national church; and a compliance with whatever ceremonial regulations are enjoined for the sake of public decency and order, is a duty, because their appointment is strictly within the province of an ecclesiastical establishment.

In the performance of moral and religious obligations, much is also unavoidably left to the discretion of individuals. While the duty is peremptorily enjoined by the inspired writers, the limitations to which it is subject, the means of fulfilling it, the choice of opportunities, and other circumstances connected with its discharge, are to be regulated by the prudence of each believer. So with respect to the sabbath. The duty of consecrating it in a holy and devout manner, is declared by the great Sovereign Lord, while the mode is partly submitted to human determination. In this and all other cases where the sacred Scriptures give no express directions, much, after all the prescribed rites and ordinances of the church, must be left to the guidance of every man's con-

science; and he who with sincerity of purpose wishes to comply with the commandment, may rely that, through the assistance and illumination of the Holy Spirit, he will not err very far from the truth. An honest intention will rarely fail, through the divine blessing, to arrive at right conclusions on all points connected with practical religion; at any rate, beings responsible for their conduct are bound to follow the light of that internal monitor, which the Deity has implanted to be the arbiter of our actions. Nor is there room for apprehension, that those who obey the dictates of conscience will perform an unacceptable service. The votive offering of a heart actuated by pure faith, and bounding with a humble piety, will be graciously received by a God of mercy, as the offering of sincerity and truth. In all cases, however, where the inspired writings have not descended to particulars, something must be left to individual conscience and discretion, as well as to the authority of ecclesiastical power.

On these accounts it will occur, that, amid a general agreement as to the duty of religiously solemnizing the Lord's day, there will be some shades of difference in practice. All sincere believers are aiming, though by courses somewhat various, to one common end; and this correspondency of motive should teach us to look with liberality and candour on such as do not accord with

us in those doctrines and practices which are not *expressly* enforced by the pen of inspiration. It must not, however, be understood as if holy Scripture supplied us with no directions whatever for the discharge of so momentous a duty as the sanctification of the sabbath. There are general rules propounded for our guidance, which may be applied to particular cases; and though the precise manner of consecrating the seventh day is not stated in the Christian Scriptures, as it would have led to a minuteness at once tedious and unprofitable, we are not wholly destitute of Scriptural authority on the subject. Something relative to its observance may be inferred from the law itself; something from the practice of the apostles; something from the incidental remarks of Revelation; something from its prevailing tenour; and something from the general principles of morality. By the combination of what may be collected from these sources, minds well exercised by the reverential study of the Book of Life, will chalk out for themselves a mode of keeping the sabbath day holy, consistently with the divine will; and though they may not be entirely agreed, they will not separate to an irreconcileable distance. For this result, however, it is indispensable to be well disciplined in the word of God; for if we bring to the examination minds warped by prejudice, inflamed by enthusiasm, or

blindly attached to a previously formed system, discordant and multifarious opinions must be the consequence. Those who, with meek reverence, strive to collect the hallowed truths of Scripture by the cool exercise of interpretive criticism, will not differ as to the nature of the sabbatical duties, more than may well be forgiven to each other in the spirit of Christian charity.

Be it our endeavour, then, to gather into a focus the disseminated beams of Revelation which illustrate this branch of the inquiry. It were easy, after the example of some writers, by pursuing this subject through its various ramifications, to accumulate a multiplicity of precepts. But to descend to particulars, and to discuss every minute point connected with the practical duties of the sabbath, would not only occupy too large a space, but would, moreover, lead us to dwell upon matters, many of which must, after all, be left to the decision of individuals. It is not uncommon for those who agree in the rule to differ in its application, especially in questions relating to the lesser points of moral conduct, which, admitting some variety, according to the diversified situations and characters of men, must be referred, ultimately, to every one's own conscience. Without attempting an enumeration of specific instances, which would not be of much practical utility, my sole aim is, to deduce those

general principles by which private persons ought to be guided in preserving, and ecclesiastical governors in enforcing, the sanctity of the weekly festival. This shall be attempted, not from any confidence in the Author's own competency, still less through the presumption of dictating to the consciences of others; but in the humble hope that the aid of the Spirit of Truth will not be wanting in a cause so sacred. In pursuance of this object, the inquiry naturally divides itself into two parts; the *first* respecting the negative, and the *second* respecting the positive duties of the Lord's day; or, in other words, it may be considered as a day of rest, and a day of holiness.

SECTION I.

The Sabbath considered as a Day of rest and relaxation.

The sabbath, according to its original institution, is to be a day separated from all others, and devoted to sacred purposes, which implies a cessation from worldly labours and employments; and this is further confirmed by the express enactment of the fourth Commandment: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." From the various applications of the Hebrew word here rendered "work," it appears evidently to denote, as Taylor in his *Concordance* explains it, "any work, business, or affairs done or transacted by God or man;" and of course the prohibition is full, direct, and unequivocal against secular employment on the Lord's day. The Almighty points out the proportion of

time which he allows for the management both of our temporal affairs, and spiritual concerns; and to let the former trench on the time which he demands for his own immediate service, is incompatible with this solemn requirement.

Yet not every kind of work is forbidden, but only that which is the principal occupation of the preceding portion of the week. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;" that is, all the labour required in the station of life in which man is placed: whatever may be his avocation, he is to execute it on six successive days; but "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work;" that is, as is clear from the parallelism of the expressions, any work which is the proper employment of the six days. Works of every description are not prohibited, for some are absolutely necessary, but that specific work alone which is allowed on the six days before mentioned. Whatever is the general and customary employment of these days, ought to be omitted on the seventh; for that work which is permitted, or rather enjoined, on the former, is directly forbidden on the latter. Hence the meaning of the precept is, that the seventh day ought to be a cessation from those worldly occupations to the performance of which the other days are devoted. The sum and substance of the command is thus explained by a

sensible writer on the subject. "Thou shalt not follow any trade, or worldly employment whatsoever, whether it be the labour of the body, the hands, or the head, which on other days is pursued for the sake of worldly enjoyment, and to provide for this bodily dying life[b]."

Agreeably to this interpretation, the statute cannot fairly be charged with being harsh, or impracticably rigid. The Jews were bound, under the penalty of death, to observe a still stricter rest on the sabbath; but theirs was a law of carnal commandments, restraining the people under a severe tutelage, and burthensome by various severe prescriptions, from the obligation of which Christ has set his disciples free. Judaism was a dispensation of rigour and severity; Christianity is a law of mercy, of tenderness, and of liberty. The sabbatical enactments which remain binding upon believers, in the Gospel, are neither unreasonable nor austere, only requiring a septenary rest from the business of our callings, and daily

[b] Wright, *Treatise on the Lord's Day*, cap. iii. sect. 1. "Non facies in ea, (*scil.* septima die) omne opus: quod? utique tuum. Consequens est, ut ea opera sabbato auferret, quæ sex diebus supra induxerat: tua scilicet, id est, humana, et quotidiana."—Tertullian, *Advers. Marcion.* lib. ii. § 21. p. 392, C. Others of the fathers agree in limiting the prohibition to servile and secular works; Irenæus, *Advers. Hæres.* lib. iv. cap. xx.; Jerome, *Comment. in Isa.* cap. lviii.; Augustine, *Homil.* 151 *de Tempore*, tom. 10.

occupations. Six days of the week are allowed for the promotion of our temporal interests, and the abstraction of the seventh for concerns of infinitely higher moment, so far from being a rigorous exaction, must be deemed a law at once merciful towards man, and necessary to the purposes of devotion. Were all employed on that day, as they ought to be, in giving attendance to the concerns of an eternal world, they would have no leisure for secular employments. The ordinary labours and occupations of life are, therefore, to be suspended on that day, which is peculiarly the Lord's; the business of the shop, the counting-house, and the manufactory is to cease; the labouring classes are to rest from their toils, the higher from their professions and pursuits; and the mind is to be kept as free as possible from the distraction of secular cares and avocations. To forbid absolutely every kind of work, would be rigorous and unreasonable; but to prohibit the exercise of our ordinary callings on the sabbath, is a law of easy comprehension, and not less in accordance with humanity than with religion.

In this view of the sabbatical law, he who sincerely purposes obedience, will rarely, if ever, hesitate concerning the nature of his compliance. The least consideration must shew to every man whether he have abstained from the customary labours of his station. They are as various as

the various ranks of society; but, of whatever description they may consist, the performance of them is a violation of the statute. The sabbath may be equally profaned by the labour of the head as of the hand, by mental no less than bodily exertion, in privacy as well as in the busy hum of men. The desecration of this holy season is not extenuated by veiling it from public view; the retired prosecution of profane literature, the perusing and writing letters on business, the balancing of accounts, the arrangement of worldly concerns, or engaging others in such employments, is as culpable as public commercial transactions, or the cultivation of the ground. To enumerate particulars, however, were a waste of time, as every one is competent to decide, in his own individual case, in what manner the law is to be obeyed. If he do not abstain from those occupations, of whatever kind, which he pursues during the six days, with worldly views, and for worldly ends, he violates the sacred rest. So far from consecrating the season to the offices of religion, he profanes it by secular employments; and let not such a one lay the flattering unction to his soul that he will escape merited punishment for refusing to the Deity the homage which he claims as his unalienable right.

What we are forbid to do ourselves, it is evidently wrong to do by our servants and depend-

ants. On this point the law is particular and express, extending the sacred rest to those who are in subordinate situations; and to employ them in worldly business, is in direct contradiction to the statute[b]. It is but too common, even with such as refrain from secular pursuits themselves, to engage others in occupations inconsistent with the sabbatical rest. So much is often required from servants as leaves them but little leisure for exercises befitting the season, and sometimes scarcely opportunity for attendance on public worship. Any employment of dependants beyond what necessity demands, is opposed by the clear declaration of God's word, and is as much a breach of the commandment as if their masters did it in their own persons. It is an act of oppression and tyranny to infringe, for the sake of a little interest or pleasure, upon that rest and relaxation which those who are in humbler situations have a right to enjoy, and which to them is a boon granted by a merciful Providence. Cruel as it is to deprive them, as members of society, of the repose to which they are entitled, it is doing a still more fatal injury to their immortal souls. The profanation of the sabbath is, in general, among the lower orders, the forerunner of every crime; and aggravated is the guilt of lead-

[b] Exod. xx. 10. Deut. v. 14.

ing them, by any means, to disregard an ordinance, the reverence of which is so important to the preservation of their religious principles. Dreadful is the account which we must render at the tribunal of Heaven, if we have been instrumental in the eternal ruin of those whose virtue and piety it is our duty to promote.

From the benefits of the law, which provides a weekly rest for the labouring classes, the animal creation are not excluded. On the sabbath day "THOU shalt not do any work—NOR ANY OF THY CATTLE." Here, then, is a direct prohibition against all unnecessary using or working of the domesticated animals on this day, and of course the loading of beasts, the driving of teams, the running of horses in carriages, beyond what is requisite for the real benefit of man, are unquestionably forbidden. The usual employment of beasts is contrary to the general law against working on the Lord's day; but it is prohibited by a specific enactment in the Decalogue, ordaining a regular time in which they are to rest from labour, and to recruit their exhausted strength. Divine Providence surveys, with benignant eye, the vast circuit of creation, in every minute part of which, as far as we can trace it, we see the manifestation of his wisdom, power, and mercy; nor is any creature that lives and moves beneath his notice or his care. Of all the evidences of

his unbounded goodness, none are more impressive, more fitted to excite an idea of the immensity of his benevolence, than his providing by an express revelation for the comfort of the animals subjected to the service of man. While grateful, therefore, for our dominion over the brute creation, we should remember that we are not to exercise it with harshness, or unfeeling cruelty. God hath blessed every living creature[d]; he careth for the cattle[e]; and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him[f]. Far, then, from treating them with the savage brutality, which, shocking as it is to humanity, is but too often practised, we are not wantonly or unnecessarily to deprive them of the indulgence of a stated rest[g].

In conformity with this principle we are to forbear employing them, without urgent cause, in journeying abroad on the Lord's day. It is a most unwarrantable exercise of our dominion over them to pursue our profit or pleasure, without any regard to the fatigues and hardships which

[d] Gen. i. 21. et seq.

[e] Deut. xxv. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 9.

[f] Matt. x. 29.

[g] Since writing the above, I observed in the Courier Newspaper for June 17th, 1824, the Report of a Meeting for the purpose of forming a "Society for the preventing of cruelty to Animals;" and every friend to humanity must wish success to the design.

they undergo. Sunday travelling is in other respects a disobedience of the divine command, for it deprives the offender of the means of joining in the public worship of the Almighty, sets a bad example of carelessness about holy things, and frustrates the object of the sabbatical institution by raising obstacles to the devotions of others. But the evils of this custom will be most effectually exposed in the strong and nervous language of Bishop Horsley.

"It breaks in, (says he,) upon the principal business of the day, laying some under a necessity, and furnishing others with a pretence, for withdrawing ourselves from the public assemblies; and it defeats the ordinance in its subordinate ends, depriving servants and cattle of that temporary exemption from fatigue which it was intended both should enjoy. This, like other evils, has arisen from small beginnings; and by an unperceived, because a natural and a gradual growth, hath attained at last an alarming height. Persons of the higher ranks, whether from a certain vanity of appearing great, by assuming a privilege of doing what was generally forbidden, or for the convenience of travelling when the roads were most empty, began within our own memory to make their journeys on a sunday. In a commercial country, the great fortunes acquired in trade have a natural tendency to level all dis-

tinctions but what arise from affluence. Wealth supplies the place of nobility; birth retains only the privilege of setting the first example. The city presently catches the manners of the court; and the vices of the high-born peer are faithfully copied in the life of the opulent merchant, and the thriving tradesman. Accordingly, in the space of a few years, the sunday became the travelling day of all who travel in their own carriages. But why should the humbler citizen, whose scantier means oblige him to commit his person to the crammed stage coach, more than his wealthier neighbour be exposed to the hardship of travelling on the working days, when the multitude of heavy carts and waggons moving to and fro in all directions, renders the roads unpleasant and unsafe to all carriages of a lighter fabric; especially when the only real inconvenience, the danger of such obstructions, is infinitely increased to him, by the greater difficulty with which the vehicle in which he makes his uncomfortable journey crosses out of the way, in deep and miry roads, to avoid the fatal jostle? The force of these principles was soon perceived, and, in open defiance of the laws, stage-coaches have for several years travelled on the sundays. The waggoner soon understands that the road is as free for him as for the coachman,—that if the magistrate connives at the one he cannot enforce

the law against the other; and the sunday traveller now breaks the sabbath without any advantage gained in the safety or pleasure of his journey. It may seem that the evil, grown to this height, would become its own remedy: but this is not the case. The temptation indeed to the crime among the higher ranks of the people, subsists no longer; but the reverence for the day among all orders is extinguished, and the abuse goes on from the mere habit of profaneness. In the country, the roads are crowded on the sunday, as on any other day, with travellers of every sort. The devotion of the villagers is interrupted by the noise of the carriages passing through, or stopping at the inns for refreshment. In the metropolis, instead of that solemn stillness of the vacant streets in the hours of the public service, which might suit, as in our fathers' days, with the sanctity of the day, and be a reproof to every one who should stir abroad but upon the business of devotion, the mingled racket of worldly business and pleasure is going on with little abatement; and in the churches and chapels which adjoin the public streets, the sharp rattle of the whirling phaeton, and the graver rumble of the loaded waggon, mixed with the oaths and imprecations of the brawling drivers, disturb the congregation, and stun the voice of the preacher[h]."

[h] Bishop Horsley, *Sermon* 23d.

But the law requiring a periodical suspension of the business of the world, must not be understood so strictly as to exclude every work which comes under that description. "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath [1];" and, being originally intended for his benefit, whenever a rigid observance of it would operate to the injury of his health, or the serious loss of his property, he is not bound by imperious duty to comply with the literal strictness of the injunction. What are called works of necessity, it is evident from their very nature, may be performed without infringing the statute. The only difficulty is to distinguish those which are necessary from those which are not so, which, as it should seem, admits of no other criterion than the sober discretion of each believer. It may be generally observed, that the permission includes all such works as are needful to the exercises of religion, to the sustenance of our bodies, to the care of our cattle; such as cannot be omitted without very injurious consequences; such as are requisite for domestic health and comfort; such, in short, as for some reason or other are proper to be done, not for the sake of obtaining a little pecuniary gain, but to procure some important and considerable object. All servile labour, all worldly

[1] Mark ii. 27.

business, all secular pursuits, ought, as far as possible, to be suspended; and it is necessity alone, of which every individual can judge in his own case, that can justify any abandonment of the hallowed repose of the sabbath [k].

The great design of this festival is the promotion of piety and religion, to which the rest enjoined must be subservient; and such works as may be executed without interfering with this object, are not in opposition to the laws of God. Such are works of necessity which are not referable to the disposition of the performer, because they are imposed by circumstances over which he has no control. They neither proceed from worldly motives, nor are carried on with worldly views, and therefore, in a moral point of view, are matters of indifference. Here, as in every thing else where human conduct is concerned, the motive is chiefly to be looked at; for where that is in unison with the revealed will of God, the action which

[k] It is well observed by a pagan: "Scævola consultus quid feriis agi liceret, respondit, quod prætermissum noceret." (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, lib. i. cap. xvi.) This writer tells us, *in loc. citat.* "affirmabant sacerdotes pollui ferias, si indictis conceptisque opus aliquod fieret: præterea regem sacrorum flaminesque non licebat videre feriis opus fieri; et idea per præconem denunciabatur ne quid tale ageretur: et præcepti negligens multabatur, præter multam affirmabatur eum, qui talibus diebus imprudens aliquid egisset, porco piaculum dare debere; prudentem expiare non posse."

proceeds from it will not be criminal. Hence works on the Lord's day, in themselves the most innocent, may become sinful by being executed with improper motives. As for example, it is perfectly right for persons to adorn themselves in attire becoming their rank and station; but those who do it from a love of empty parade, or with the intent to outvie their neighbours, and to gain admiration, convert the holy season into an occasion of culpable vanity. Works of necessity may thus become criminal, if performed with views and purposes at variance with the sanctity of the sabbath; while, on the other hand, there need be no scruple in such employments as do not interfere with the temper and frame of mind suitable to so sacred a festival. Works, however, the moral character of which so much depends upon the motive, cannot be judged by any human tribunal; they are to be arbitrated between every man's conscience and his God; and any attempt to define them minutely is as idle as presumptuous, trenching upon that liberty which we enjoy in Christ.

A formal enumeration, likewise, of particulars, if it were possible, would be attended with little practical advantage, since different minds, acting from an equally conscientious regard to duty, will not unfrequently view them in different lights. Thus by one writer we are told, that

"Employing others about our persons, as barbers, hair-dressers, and the like, is a direct violation of the original law of the sabbath, and of the fourth commandment. Nor is there any reason to except those occupations, which consist in preparing materials even for food [l]." Another writer seriously inquires whether the preparing of food on the sabbath, the kindling of a fire, the act of self-defence, the extinguishing of devouring flames, be works of necessity; and he decides in the affirmative [m]. But all such matters, varying as they must according to circumstances, are better left to the discretion of individuals. The general law is, that we are to abstain from our secular business, of what description soever, and an honest heart will rarely be at a loss to discover the exceptions, or to distinguish what may or may not be done without infringing the command.

Works of charity were not excluded by the rigour of the Mosaic law, much less can they be so under a more benign and gracious dispensation. There is something so truly Christian in the exercise of a philanthropic disposition as fits it for all times and seasons; and it is not only allowable, but seems especially appropriate, on a day consecrated to the honour of a pardoning

[l] Job Orton, *Six Discourses on the Lord's Day*, Disc. 3.

[m] Glen, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, cap. iv. sect. iv. § 2.

God. To relieve the indigent, to comfort the mourners, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to extend the hand of succour to the needy, to augment the comforts of a brother Christian; these are actions which will ever be approved by a Being of infinite mercy, which will for ever brighten in the glory of eternity. Our Saviour both taught the lawfulness of doing well on that sacred day, and exemplified his doctrine by performing many miracles on it in compassion to the infirmities of the people. On the sabbath he cured the man with the withered hand [n]; he cured a man who had the dropsy [o]; he cured a woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity eighteen years [p]; he cured the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda [q]; and he cured the man who was blind from his birth [r]. In humble imitation of the divine pattern of our blessed Lord, we ought to hallow his sacred day by doing good, and shewing mercy. To shut up our bowels of compassion against a fellow-creature in distress, is wholly unsuitable to a season so adapted to excite emotions of generosity and kindness. It is the spirit of unsocial bigotry to withhold the meed of charity and benevolence on the seventh day, because we are commanded to rest upon it.

[n] Matt. xii. 9—13.
[o] Luke xiv. 1—6.
[p] Luke xiii. 10—17.
[q] John v. 1, et seq.
[r] John ix. 1, et seq.

It is to suffer that which is ritual to interfere with the weightier matters of the law: it is a dereliction of every principle by which the true Christian should be distinguished. Let no opportunity, then, be omitted, no disposition wanting, to perform the offices of that love which is the discriminating badge of our fellowship with the Father and with the Son[1].

Some modes of distributing charity are so nearly allied to civil institutions, that it is no easy matter to decide whether they are lawful on the Lord's day. Thus, the concerns of schools for the education of poor children, of Dispensaries, of Benefit Clubs, and of other charitable societies, are sometimes managed by committees and meetings on a sunday; and the functions of select vestries, the appointment of which has contributed more to the diminution of pauperism than any other legislative measure, are very often exercised, especially in country places, on alternate sundays. Of these the end is benevolent and praise-worthy, which, in the opinion of many, will justify the means; yet the conducting of them on the Lord's day partakes so much of secularity, and is so connected with secular matters, that he who doubts its lawfulness may well be exonerated from the charge of puritanical

[1] 1 John iv. 7—21.

rigour. A total exclusion, however, of every thing allied to civil employment, it is to be feared, could not be effected, in the present state of society, without detriment to certain charities themselves. In reference to select vestries, it is questionable whether, in very many places, a sufficient attendance of the members could be obtained on any other day, in default of which the object of that admirable institution could not be secured. Works of charity, besides, are at all times proper, and under this description we may surely rank such works as it is for the interest of the poor, the sick, the aged, the infirm, that they should be performed. The apostle exhorts the Corinthians to make collections for the saints on the first day of the week[t]; and if we are thus warranted in making charitable contributions, we are, by parity of reason, justified in ordering and distributing them on that holy season. So much may be said in defence, or rather in extenuation of the practices alluded to; it is, nevertheless, desirable, even in the beneficent offices of providing for the poor, that every thing wearing a civil or secular character should, as far as possible, be omitted on the Lord's day; and it is only some evident advantage, or undeniable expediency, which can vindicate its employment[u].

[t] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

[u] It is matter of regret to many pious persons, that the Le-

Allowable as it is on the sabbath to administer kindness to our brethren, is it equally so to do any thing for the sake of communicating or receiving amusement? A nice and delicate question this, and one which, more perhaps than any other connected with the subject, requires for its determination the exercise of mutual candour and forbearance. Many writers and preachers condemn, without restriction, all secular pleasures on this sacred day; but that amusements are, to a certain extent, permitted, is implied in the sabbatical command, for the injunction to remit the accustomed toils of life not only is, but must have been intended to be, a source of delight; and it is in perfect harmony with this design, to allot some portion of the day to proper recreation and refreshment. Under Judaism it is declared to be the object of the institution that beasts of burthen, servants, and labourers, might *be refreshed*[x]; and it cannot be supposed to have a less beneficent intention under Christianity. Contemplating the ease and lightness of the Christian yoke, the spirit of tenderness and love which

gislature, without due attention to the sacredness of the time and place, has enacted that so many things of a secular nature should be done or published in the churches; and it is much to be wished that some other means could be devised to attain the object, without such hindrances to public devotion.

[x] Exodus xxiii. 12.

breathes throughout the gospel, the benevolence of its ordinances, the benignity of its precepts, the freedom and cheerfulness of the services required, together with the total absence of all rigour and austerity, it cannot be imagined that a God so merciful and gracious would forbid innocent recreation on the day set apart for his praise and worship. He has so constituted the human powers, that seasonable relaxation is indispensable to their legitimate use; the mind cannot remain upon the stretch for an intire day; and the spiritual exercises of the sabbath, like every other which demand a steady application, require convenient intermissions. Whatever may be pretended by those who, under the impulse of fanaticism or hypocrisy, overstep the sobriety of truth, it is impossible to be wholly occupied for so long a space as one day, in the public and private duties of religion: some relaxation, then, there must be; and the divine Being will never be offended with that which he has rendered necessary by the constitution of human nature.

To describe particularly what recreations are lawful, varied as they must be according to the diversified tastes, habits, inclinations, and circumstances of mankind, were a hopeless task. All that can be attempted here is to propose those general rules by which a Christian conduct ought, in these matters, to be uniformly guided. And

this plan is recommended by the consideration that, as the leading principles of sunday recreations rest upon the basis of Scripture, a more general agreement may be expected, than in their application to individual cases, in which some difference of opinion will naturally arise.

In the *first* place, whatever forms the ordinary occupation of life must not be permitted for sunday amusement, inasmuch as it is included in the prohibition of the fourth commandment. By the prescribed cessation of the daily employments of the world, a resumption of them by any person, or for any purpose, for pleasure or for profit, or with any view beyond what necessity and charity may demand, is undoubtedly forbidden. To many individuals different kinds of mechanical labour afford very great pleasure, as turning, carving, gilding, casting metals, varnishing, making various articles of cabinet-work, &c. The exercise of the fine arts, drawing, engraving, painting, sculpture, is a source of still higher gratification; others take great delight in the rural sports of fishing, shooting, training of dogs and horses; and, in fact, there is scarcely any worldly business which may not, to some persons or other, be the means of occasional recreation; but, of whatever description it may be, as being a worldly business, it is prohibited on the Lord's day. It matters not whether it be our usual and

proper calling; neither does it make any difference in the case that it is exercised solely for recreation, without any view to emolument; it is one of the common businesses of the world, and, as such, is to be remitted on the sabbath. Whatever comes under the denomination of the works forbidden in the fourth commandment, as all secular employments do, must not be practised, even for the sake of amusement, and for the shortest time, on pain of incurring the guilt of violating the law.

Nor is it necessary, to constitute this offence, to be ourselves actively engaged in any of the customary employments of life; it is equally culpable to be present for the purpose of deriving amusement from them, though performed by others; for that is an evident participation in them, within the meaning of the commandment; and it is an acknowledged axiom of law and morality, that accessaries share the crime with the principals. Between him who is the real agent in a forbidden work, and him who witnesses it for the sake of the pleasure it affords him, there is not a shade of moral distinction; and the criminality, to whatever degree it may rise, attaches alike to both. This principle excludes such entertainments as are derived from the exercise of that which forms the worldly calling of any class of persons. Of this description are theatrical

representations, and many other public diversions, to the exhibition and enjoyment of which it is requisite for certain individuals to exercise their wonted employments. Such persons are clearly following their worldly business, contrary to the provisions of the divine statute; and those who, by being present, participate in such spectacles, unquestionably participate in the guilt. It is very mean, as well as very unprincipled, to lead others into sin for the sake of deriving from it a temporary gratification. From such baseness an attendance on any *public* diversions on the sabbath can rarely be exempt. Those who conduct them act from mercenary motives, those who are present from feelings of levity; and all waste so much time in a secular and unprofitable way, which should be consecrated to holier purposes, or to recreations less tumultuous, and more innocent. Amusements, of whatever kind and character, which either consist in, or necessarily require the exercise of worldly pursuits, are irreconcileable with the law of the Decalogue.

The recreations of the sabbath should, in the *second* place, be consistent with the sacred objects of the institution. Whatever are riotous and noisy, occasioning that intemperate mirth which absorbs the mental powers within its vortex, are contrary to those serious impressions, which the devout appropriation of the day was intended to

produce. The law which enjoins it to be kept holy, virtually forbids every species of excitement incompatible with devotional feelings, as must be the effect of all recreations that are not calm, tranquillizing, and sedate. Those that produce a lassitude of body or mind, also indispose the faculties to serious thought, keep the heart cold and indifferent to religious sentiment, and create that distaste for devotional intercourse with God, which it is the gracious design of the sabbath to preserve and enliven. Clamorous mirth cannot accord with the feelings of piety, and the train of serious thought, which the holy festival of the Lord should implant and cherish. The din of the chase, the acclamations of the theatre, the hurry and tumult of processions, splendid entertainments, and public performances, are diametrically opposite to every object for which the sabbath was appointed. It may reasonably admit a doubt whether any *public* amusement be compatible with that soberness of mind, without which the religious duties of the institution cannot be adequately performed. They not only tend to secularize the day, but distract the mind, and excite associations very ill adapted to a humble spirit of devotion. Still more reprehensible are all amusements calculated to inflame the passions, as games of chance, lotteries, and the thousand modes by which money is lost and won. In every stage of

gambling, from the highest to the lowest, there is more or less of bad feeling. When money is at stake, the mind is seldom altogether indifferent; there is commonly exultation on the one hand, chagrin on the other, and a general interest excited, wholly at variance with the pious and contemplative purposes of the Lord's day. As nothing should be suffered to interfere with these purposes, no recreation can be innocent which is calculated to banish the disposition of mind requisite for the consecration of the day to the service of the Creator; and to whatever relaxation we may have recourse, it ought to be mild, temperate, rational, such as befits a mind engaged in the solemn and important service of its God.

It may be laid down as a *third* rule, that sabbath recreations ought to be, as far as may be, different from the ordinary amusements of the other days. By the original blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, it was separated from common to sacred uses; and by consequence it is incumbent upon believers to abstain, as far as possible, from every thing, whether of business or of pleasure, which forms the common pursuits of the preceding six days. On this portion of the week it is proper to follow worldly employments, but the sabbath is distinguished as the Lord's, for which reason a devout heart will feel itself bound to abstain from some things, in other respects

lawful, merely for the sake of this distinction. It is not unfrequently asked, Where is the harm of chess, or a game of cards, of fishing or shooting, of singing a song, or playing an overture, when they do not interfere with the duties of the sunday? And well-educated persons are sometimes heard to declare, that they reject them merely from the consideration of the injury which servants and others might sustain by the example. The motive is so far right, since every man is bound by the Christian law to consult the morals of his domestics; but if the diversions alluded to were otherwise unexceptionable, yet they are reprehensible as having a tendency to secularise the holy season. They are, indeed, on other grounds objectionable on the Lord's day, but if they could be proved to be in every other respect perfectly harmless, they ought to be rejected by pious families as an infringement of the sacred character of the sabbath. Every trespass against its external and visible solemnity, breaks down the barrier by which it is separated to the service of religion, and thereby diminishes the reverence for religion itself, so far as the effect of the example reaches. The admission of such amusements assimilates the seventh to the other days of the week, which never can be done without diminishing its solemnity and usefulness. It is very important to the interests of true religion

to preserve the separation between sacred and common days, and every conscientious person will abstain from certain things, in themselves perhaps indifferent, in order to mark this distinction the more strongly. The law which commands a cessation of labour virtually includes a prohibition against the ordinary pastimes of men, and who that reverences this divine law will refuse the surrender of a little amusement for the more complete sanctification of a day which the Almighty bids to be hallowed.

Recreations, in the *last* place, should not occupy so much time as to trespass upon the more important duties of the sabbath. It is a day appropriated to prayer and worship, to devout communion and religious improvement, objects confessedly the most momentous, and with which nothing should be suffered to interfere. Amusement is not the business of those sacred hours; it is an indulgence permitted to the weakness of human nature; and no more time should be given to it than is necessary to bodily refreshment, and to unbend the mind, which would be oppressed by unremitting exertion. Whatever exceeds this, whatever interferes with the offices of piety, though perfectly innocent in itself, contravenes the principal design of the institution. Pleasure is sweet to the heart of man, lulling vigilance to sleep with its fascinating notes, and stealing im-

perceptibly on the affections, till the whole soul is engrossed by its soft seduction. It is the syren by which thousands have been deluded to a fatal neglect of all that is essential to virtue and happiness; and while they have fancied themselves reposing in rosy bowers, they have been rapidly hastening to destruction. Dangerous as its allurements always are, they are more so on the sabbath day: the remission of labour facilitates its approach, and it is apt to find too easy an access into the bosom, amid the disengagements of secular pursuits. Except a wakeful guard be placed in the avenues of delight, except a steady watch be kept over the feelings and the passions, pleasure, in one shape or other, will usurp too great an influence over the heart; so that the sabbath will be viewed rather as a day of pleasure, than of religious improvement. If a vigilant eye is not set over the sunday amusements, they will be apt to overstep the just limits; one indulgence will follow another, and little relaxations of sabbatical duty will pave the way for still greater, till the sanctity of the season is forgotten in the mad career of indulgence. Diversions, therefore, the most appropriate, must not be suffered to interest the mind too deeply, nor to employ too great a portion of the day; otherwise they become criminal, by usurping the time which should be devoted to higher and more useful purposes.

Within these prescribed rules, recreations are both lawful and expedient on the Lord's day. Though they must be limited and modified in accordance with the holy design of the sabbath, a sufficiently ample field is left for every legitimate object of amusement. The cheerful walk, the pleasures of domestic society, the charms of social conversation, the perusal of instructive books, and the fertile stores of a moral literature, open sources of amusement equally pure and rational. At the exclusion of noisy, public, and arousing diversions, it would be unreasonable to complain; since, being incompatible with seriousness of thought, they are incompatible with the design of a sacred festival. Nor is it just to murmur at the prohibition of certain amusements, as a diminution of the stock of harmless pleasures, when so many sources of recreation, such vast stores of moral and intellectual delight, are in return freely offered for acceptance. We are not required to make it a day of gloom and solitude, of cheerless service, and peevish mortification. The strictness of our faith does not require us to deaden the finer feelings of the heart by stifling each soft and social impulse. The affections are implanted by a beneficent Being, who cannot be offended when they beam forth amid the tranquillity of the sacred hours. Monkish austerity, and a forbidding, sour, melancholy

seclusion, are repugnant to the benevolent spirit of Christianity, all whose requirements sweeten the passage through this vale of woe, and all whose prospects charm the mind into an oblivion of earth-born cares. We are to call the sabbath a delight[a]; it is to be a day of joy and gladness, a festival for the refreshment, not the maceration of the body; for the edification, not the afflicting of the mind; no proper indulgence, no needful relaxation of the faculties is prohibited; the duties of the holy season may be relieved by innocent amusements, and abundance of rational pleasures may be enjoyed, while, at the same time, every thing intended to unbend and recreate, must be of that sober and sedate kind, which can alone harmonize with the sacredness of a day sanctified for the service of God.

Nor should the duties of the weekly festival be regarded as a task and labour so much as a recreation and enjoyment. Easy is the yoke of Christ, light is the burthen laid upon us by our vocation; and the service of a God whose perfections we adore, and whose mercies we love, calls into exertion the sweetest affections of the soul. No happier moments are experienced than in the performance of holy offices, in which the whole heart is poured forth in love, and gratitude, and bless-

[a] Isa. lviii. 13.

ing and praise to its Creator. Delightful are the emotions of those who, harassed with terrestrial cares, or satiated with the empty gratifications of life, refresh their fainting spirits with the weekly pleasures of religion. How contemptible are all the pursuits of a world which passeth away as a shadow, compared with the enraptured employment of worshipping the Lord of lords? With conscious satisfaction thence arising, the exulting hope is kindled that, by such preparation, the soul is fitting itself for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality. All earthly joys fade away in comparison of the sacred transports of a soul in communion with God. The fellowship of kindred spirits in the same duties gives a warmer glow to piety, and awakens in the heart whatever is animated in devotion, whatever is social and divine. No less delightful is the retirement allotted to the private exercises of religion; in the fervency of secret prayer the soul ascends to the throne of Grace, and, in meditating on the truths of Revelation, the mind is elevated with themes calculated to excite astonishment by their grandeur, and love by their overflowing kindness. The requirements of the sabbatical service, so far from being austere and forbidding, are fitted to produce all that is pleasant and peaceful, all that is ennobling, all that raises our intellectual nature to a purer enjoyment than this world affords. Un-

reasonable, then, is it to murmur at the sabbath as an abridgment of human felicity, or to complain at the want of amusement amid such a profusion of pleasures the most sacred. Pitiable are those hearts which feel no conscious gratification at the Lord's festival, which spend it in weariness and distaste, which take no delight in duties so well adapted to exalt and exhilarate. The faithful and sincere hail its return as the season of their happiest hours; with the sweet Psalmist of Israel they are glad at the invitation "to go into the house of the Lord [b];" and in the hallowed moments of sacred joy, the worshipper exclaims, "Lord, how love I thy law: a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness [c]."

To those who have a just sense of the value of religion, and whose affections are centered, where they ought, upon things heavenly and eternal, the whole service of the Lord's day administers the most refined enjoyment, in addition to which there are recreations in abundance which may be harmlessly and lawfully enjoyed. All diversions, indeed, are not admissible, and I have attempted to draw the line of distinction according to the spirit and declarations of scripture. But far be

[b] Psalm cxxii. 1.

[c] Ibid. cxix. 97—lxxxiv. 10.

it from any minister of the gospel to lord it, in this matter, over the consciences of men. It is a subject which may well admit some difference of opinion. Even while agreed in the general principles, some diversity may exist in their application to individual instances. Such minor differences have ever been, and ever will be, and should therefore be mutually forgiven, in pity to the weakness of our common nature. They ought to be merged in the unceasing ardour to preserve the fundamentals of our faith, without being suffered to violate the bond of peace, in the search of unattainable unity. Little is the justice, and less the charity of that man, who severely censures another for matters, in respect to which God has given no explicit directions. "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way [d]." So long as there is nothing in the conduct of a brother flagrantly contrary to the Word of God, though he may be weak in the faith, yet we ought to receive him, "but not to doubtful disputations [e]." We may be truly charged with being angry with him without a cause, if we are offended merely because we cannot consent to join him

[d] Rom. xiv. 13. Compare ver. 4, 10. James iv. 11, 12.

[e] Rom. xiv. 1.

in certain recreations on the Lord's day. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind[f]; it rejects all harsh judgment; at the same time we are to mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to sound doctrine[g]; and, as we value the welfare of our souls,—as we prize the glory of God, and the honour of his name, we must fly from all who evidently act from impure motives, and who, in the hour of relaxation and amusement, are guided by a spirit of profaneness and impiety.

Little is the stern and unrelenting disposition to be commended, which severely censures those ranks of society who gain subsistence by their daily toil, if they devote a larger portion of the day to recreation, than those who, in the world's estimation, are accounted their more fortunate brethren. The sabbath was intended to be in part a day of refreshment to the industrious classes, which it cannot be, if made a day of puritanical rigour and mortified restraint. Those who are engaged in wearisome and unwholesome occupations, may well be excused if they take advantage of the leisure afforded them to refresh their strength and spirits by innocent amusements; and those who are confined to the noxious atmosphere of populous cities, are not to be rudely

[f] 1 Cor. xiii. 4. [g] Rom. xvi. 17.

condemned, if, issuing forth "among the pleasant villages and farms," they recruit their harassed natures with rural pleasures, and a purer air. Provided they avoid all intemperance and riot, and tumultuous mirth, and suffer not recreation to interfere with the duties of the day, nor to disturb that sobriety of mind which it was intended to preserve, they cannot be culpable in accepting the offered boon of harmless pleasure. Sunday cannot be wholly passed in the devout offices of the church and the closet, nor would it accord with its destination to render it, by unnecessary austerity, dismal and forbidding. While therefore, we earnestly contend for the fulfilment both of the public and private duties of religion, let us not forbid what Providence has allowed to all, according to their respective ranks and avocations—seasonable intermissions for rational indulgence.

SECTION II.

The Religious observance of the Sabbath.

By the primæval blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, God separated it from common to sacred uses; it should not, therefore, be made a day of indolence, a day of mere exemption from worldly labours and employments. There may be a scrupulous preservation of the positive rest, and a total abstinence from business and unholy amusement, but with little spiritual advantage. The refreshment of the body is one reason for the institution of a weekly rest; but, according to its primitive destination, it must be such a rest from secular labours as will minister to the nourishment of the soul. The day, then, cannot be worthily consecrated, unless it be hallowed by the exercises of piety and devotion. Lamentable is the misemployment of the sacred season, if it does not excite the religious feelings which it is so peculiarly fitted to cherish and improve. Being chiefly intended for the cultivation of those principles of holiness without which an inheritance

cannot be obtained among the saints in light, if it is not employed suitably to this object, the principal design of the institution is frustrated, and the most valuable of its benefits forfeited. It remains, therefore to inquire into the nature of the holy services in which Christians are to engage, that they may convert the day to the uses of a pious edification.

From this primary and general design of the sabbatical institution, arises the indispensable duty of public worship. The divine command to keep the seventh day holy, implies that something holy is to be performed on it, and in Christian holiness a public expression of prayer and thanksgiving is an essential ingredient. It was intended, by commemorating the stupendous mercies of the Tri-une God in the creation of the world, and the redemption of man, to encourage the holy preparation of heart which becomes the expectants of eternity. Because the Divine Being rested on this day from the work of creation, he sanctified it; from which it is evident that the exemption from worldly toil is to be instrumental to a spiritual and hallowed service. Rest is enjoined, but the end and object of it is the advancement of religion; and a vacancy from employment is commanded, to afford an opportunity of attendance to spiritual things. But there can be no serious attention to the things which

belong unto our salvation, no sincere religion without a devout participation in the public services of the church.

A diligent and constant attendance upon the public worship of God, is a duty repeatedly inculcated in the sacred Scriptures[a]. Our Saviour promised his especial presence and blessing whenever two or three are gathered together in his name[b]; he instituted two sacraments, the celebration of which requires a public service[c]; and he appointed a standing ministry to publish the gospel to the world, which can only be in Christian assemblies[d]. We are commanded not to forsake the assembling ourselves together[e]; and the Holy Spirit enjoins men to "pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting[f]; a compliance with which must be more especially incumbent on the day which the Lord hath separated from all others to be the means of holiness to his servants. If public worship be an indispensable duty, its exercise on the Lord's day is necessary, for on no other has the greater part

[a] Deut. xxxi. 12. Ps. v. 7.—xxvi. 6, 7, 8.—xcv. 6.—xcvi. 9.—xcvii. 3. Matt. xviii. 20. James i. 22.

[b] Matt. xviii. 20.

[c] Matt. xxviii. 19. Luke xxii. 19.

[d] Matt. xxviii. 20. Luke x. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

[e] Heb. x. 25.

[f] 1 Tim. ii. 8.

of mankind leisure for its performance. The prescribed cessation of labour must have been with a view that men might, on one day in the week, give heed to spiritual and eternal things; and if it be claimed by the Lord as peculiarly his own day, it follows as a natural consequence, that some portion of it must be devoted to the public praise and adoration of the Lord of Hosts.

The offices of piety to God form the great business of the day; a business equally interesting to every age, rank, and distinction; and from the perpetual obligation of which no age, rank, or distinction can be exempt. In the church, then, should every Christian take his place on the Lord's day. The rich should come to be admonished of their danger, and the poor to be comforted in their affliction; the wise to be reminded of the most invaluable truths, and the ignorant to be instructed in their duty; the pious to offer up the incense of gratitude, and the sinful to prostrate themselves in penitence and supplication. All mankind being bound to a public confession of their dependence upon God, to a public supplication for the pardon of their trespasses, and to a public expression of praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings of heaven, none can forsake the assembling themselves together, without incurring a high degree of criminality. "Private devotion," says Bishop Horsley in the Ser-

mons so often referred to, "is the Christian's daily duty: but the peculiar duty of the sabbath is public worship."

For the performance of this duty there is required a conscientious attendance upon all the parts and offices of religious worship. Prayer and supplication, thanksgiving and praise, participation of the Lord's Supper, and reverent attention to the Word of God read or preached, will successively be the transporting employment of the devout worshipper at the shrine of his Creator. The hour and place of assembling, the ceremonies necessary in order to secure proper decorum in divine worship, the order in which its several parts are to succeed each other, the ritual to be observed, and other circumstances connected with the public services of religion, must be left to the regulation of ecclesiastical rulers; and it is the part of Christian humility to comply with the forms, and rites, and services of the community to which he belongs. Every church having a right to prescribe the terms of its communion, all its members are to conform to those ceremonial ordinances which it enjoins for the more effectual advancement of religion. Some mode of conducting public worship must be established in every congregation; and in this country of freedom and toleration, every individual is at liberty to join himself to whatever de-

nomination of Christians he may conscientiously prefer; but, under some form or other, the adoration of the Deity remains an indispensable duty. If divine worship be the proper business of the day, no believer in Revelation can be unnecessarily absent, without offending the Almighty Being, who has commanded the sabbath to be kept holy.

The high and spiritual delights arising from the discharge of this duty, might seem sufficient inducement to its regular performance. In renouncing for a season the business and pleasure of the world, the mind at ease and unfettered indulges the ardour of its devotion; an ardour that is the parent of the most ennobling sentiments, and that lifts it for a time beyond the narrow precincts of terrestrial nature. Joined with fellow Christians in the same devout exercises, with bosoms inspired with the same hopes, and responding to the same exalted feelings, the heart, as it bounds in rapturous communion with God, anticipates the pure joys of heaven. In the excitement thus given to the virtuous energies of moral beings, the soul is purified from the pollutions of earth, and elevated almost to a level with those spotless and ethereal intelligences who inhabit a brighter and eternal world. In these moments of devout fervency is realized the promise of the Deity, to bring those who keep the

sabbath from polluting it, to his holy mountain and to make them joyful in his house of prayer [g]. Those who have ever experienced these feelings of sacred transport will exclaim, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods [h]."

Of all the duties in which rational creatures can be engaged, that of social worship is most powerfully adapted to cherish the growth of genuine piety. The fervour attending it, the solemnity with which it is performed, and the recollections which it calls up, are calculated to stimulate our love and veneration for the Deity. In devout abstraction from worldly cares and pursuits, the mind dwells entire and undivided upon heavenly things; it is absorbed in spiritual thought; and sees with clearness and force the perfections of God as displayed in the works of creation and redemption. The blessings of salvation purchased by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, are contemplated with that deep interest which attaches the heart in gratitude to its Redeemer. A pardoning God, an interceding Saviour, a sanctifying Spirit, are presented to the

[g] Isa. lvi. 7 [h] Ps. xcv. 1—3.

view, surrounded with all the attributes which can win our affections, and command our adoration. Along with meek reverence to the ever-blessed Trinity, is awakened a sentiment of universal kindness and benevolence to man. What is more august, more affecting, more adapted to excite the feelings of brotherly affection, than the appearance of a full assembly of fellow-creatures in humble prostration before the throne of the Most High? All ranks and conditions being united in one common service, and a service stimulating the best affections of human nature, are drawn towards each other by the influence of sympathy and mutual regard. They are assembled together as members of the same family, as children of the same Parent, acknowledging the same wants, trusting in the same Saviour, and aiming at the same end by means which rarely fail, when duly applied, to melt the heart to unbounded charity. Who ever departed the company of the faithful, worshipping in the house of prayer, without experiencing a fresh stimulus to his piety towards God, and his benevolence to man?

Nor is it reasonable to doubt that the sabbatical exercises of devotion are attended with the especial favour of God. Our Lord dignified by his presence, and distinguished by his grace, the septenary day of his resurrection; and the same

day of the week, at the feast of Pentecost, was signalized by the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost. The apostles, in obedience to the command of their divine Master, "continued in fellowship, and in prayer, and in breaking of bread;" and when assembled sung "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs[i]." Many promises are made by the Almighty to devout prayer and supplication[k]; all of which apply to public worship on the Lord's day; and this is agreeable to the declaration at the first institution of the sabbath. When God appropriated the seventh day to himself, he also "blessed it," that is, promised to annex his special blessing to the pious observance of it. If we devote it to religious exercises, he has thus engaged to accept the homage which we offer to him in sincerity and truth. The Supreme Lord will then be propitious to the prayers of his faithful people; he will graciously accept the offerings of contrite hearts, shedding abroad upon them the influence of his Spirit, when they participate in the ordinances he has prescribed. So favourably does he regard public worship, that his blessing is bestowed upon the punctual discharge

[i] Acts ii. 42. Ephes. v. 19.

[k] Deut. iv. 7. Ps. lxv. 2.—lxxxvi. 5. Isa. xxx. 19. Jer. xxix. 12.—xxxiii. 3. Joel ii. 32. Zech. xiii. 9. Matt. vii. 8. Rom. x. 12, 13. 1 Tim. ii. 8. James v. 16. Revel. v. 8.—viii. 3, 4; and other places.

of this duty. Let all, therefore, who confide in the Word of God, accept the opportunities of public worship as a valuable boon; let them regard "the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable;" let them esteem "one day in his courts better than a thousand;" so will they obtain the divine favour and protection, which can alone enable them to gain the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The time, the place, and the mode of divine worship, are discussions foreign from the object of this work, which proposes only to ascertain the general duty, leaving the particular ritual observances to be determined by each national church; but the subject of evening Lectures is so identified with the public edification of the Lord's day, and has of late been so pressed upon the public attention, that I cannot forbear to offer a few observations.

The hour of holding public assemblies, being no where prescribed in the sacred Scriptures, must be determined by the authority of the church, upon those general principles which apply to every other question of religious expediency. The evils resulting from evening meetings in villages and small towns are so evident, so preponderating over the good, that the most strenuous advocates of sunday evening lectures are unanimous in confining them to cities and larger

towns, where the custom has now become almost universal. Many sensible and reflecting persons still remain adverse to the plan, which, it must be acknowledged, is liable to some abuses of too obvious a nature to escape observation. It must also be conceded to the opponents of the practice, that the time might be spent to a much more profitable purpose in the private and domestic exercises of religion. Those who have attended divine service morning and afternoon, if they were earnestly seeking the spiritual advantage of their souls, might be much better employed at home than in attending a public lecture. So great a proportion of the day being occupied in external duties, leaves too little time for secret prayer and private meditation, which are so needful to the cultivation of a rational and manly piety. Nothing is gained, though much may be lost by the performance of one duty at the expense of another, equally, or perhaps more important. If families, after the regular attendance on public worship, fulfilled the domestic requirements of the sabbath, they would derive from it far greater benefit than from the instruction of an evening preacher. But, admitting this, the existing habits of the people, and the present state of religion in our own country, evince the expediency of evening lectures in extensive and populous towns.

A general invitation is by these means given to the performance of sacred duties, which, of itself, must have some effect in preserving a sense of religion among the people; and many are induced to join in them, who would otherwise pass the time in those haunts of idleness and dissipation with which every large town abounds. To some classes, as those occupied in menial and other indispensable offices, the evening is the most convenient season for divine worship; while still more absent themselves from the afternoon service in pursuit of recreation. Those who by the habits of modern life are prevented from the public worship of the morning, are unfortunately numerous; and who would sternly condemn them, if, after labouring six days, they seek relaxation and amusement in the afternoon of the seventh? Among them are multitudes virtuously and piously inclined, who would accept it as a valuable boon, if, at the close of the day, they were provided with the means of performing their devotions in the temples of the Lord. From one cause or other a large proportion of mankind, and many, it is to be feared, of those who consider themselves Christians, neglect the private exercises of religion, for which the returning sabbath affords the opportunity and the encouragement. To such the evening lecture becomes the medium of spiritual edification; a medium less

valuable, indeed, than that of private devotion, but still to be commended, inasmuch as it is the only channel of communicating instruction to characters of this description. That it has at the same time a tendency to foster the too prevalent disposition to rely on the external duties of religion, is unquestionably true. Many have an undivided attachment to the public means of grace, and would take delight in spending the whole of the Lord's day in attendance upon favourite preachers; a spirit which has descended, though with much softening and abatement, from the age of puritanism; and an additional service in the churches gives scope for its additional indulgence. For this there is no other remedy than to inculcate, with the more earnestness, the necessity of sacred exercises in private; and that, highly as the public means of grace are to be esteemed, they ought not to be embraced to the exclusion of domestic piety. But the mischiefs arising from this source, and I am not insensible to their magnitude, are far from outweighing the advantages of opening the doors of the churches, for public devotion, at an hour most convenient to great numbers who belong to Christ's fold.

Experience proves that multitudes are ready to attend evening worship, and if the doors of the national churches be closed, those of the

meeting-houses will be open, by which means numbers may be led to desert the pale of the Establishment. Except evening lectures are adopted by the established clergy, the dissenters are left upon the vantage ground, of which they well know how to avail themselves; and such services, whether strictly accordant with the original discipline of the Anglican church or not, seem a necessary accommodation to the temper and spirit of the age. Many churchmen, when their own places of worship are closed, will not scruple to enter the dissenting chapel, which rarely fails to alienate their affections from the Establishment, and commonly ends in seceding from its communion. In saying this I am not actuated by that sensitive alarm which pervades the minds of many concerning the stability of the National Church, for, so far from being in danger, I am persuaded that her influence has been for years on the increase, and is daily increasing. It is not meant to palliate that schismatical spirit by which sects and heresies are multiplied in endless disorder. He who separates from the Established Church without candid inquiry, without careful deliberation, and conscentious motives, is guilty of a crime condemned by every principle of law, of reason, and of religion. But whether the separation be without cause, or arise from the honest conviction of the mind, there is no ade-

quate judge besides that omniscient Being who can distinguish the secrets of the heart. No one can be blind to the evils of schism; they are nevertheless so mitigated by that charity and forbearance which result from a free toleration, so diminished by counteracting good, so compensated by rousing the energies and awakening the vigilance of the clergy, that, if it were possible to produce a perfect unanimity in religious opinions, a contemplative mind might well hesitate as to its expediency. Knowing from the page of history the lamentable consequences arising from a powerful, indolent, slumbering Hierarchy, we can scarcely desire the total abolition of that which imposes the necessity of an active and faithful discharge of the clerical functions.

"Differences of opinion, (says Dr. Paley,) when accompanied with mutual charity, which Christianity forbids them to violate, are for the most part innocent, and for some purposes useful. They promote inquiry, discussion, and knowledge. They help to keep up an attention to religious subjects, and a concern about them, which might be apt to die away in the calm and silence of universal agreement. I do not know that it is in any degree true, that the influence of religion is the greatest, where there are the fewest dissenters[1]." But whatever benefits accrue to

[1] *Evidences of Christianity*, P. 3. cap. vii.

the church from the stimulus of opposition, they are only felt so long as the dissenting interest is restricted within proper bounds; beyond these it produces all the deplorable effects which follow a contention for superiority, heightened and embittered by the asperity of theological hatred. When two hostile religions are so nearly and equally balanced as to enter into a rivalry for power, the unhappy country is exposed to some of the sorest evils with which it can be visited, the evils of an interminable discord the most fierce and unrelenting. To avoid a persecuting and vindictive contest, it appears the wisest plan the Legislature can adopt, to sanction one, and allow a free toleration of the rest, as in this kingdom. Now to preserve the ascendancy of the Protestant religion established in these realms, the members of the church, and particularly the clergy, must be careful not to lose, through neglect and supineness, the advantages they enjoy, nor to yield to their opponents in that activity and zeal which can alone ensure the stability of the ecclesiastical constitution. If the doors of the churches are closed in the evening, while those of the meeting-houses are open, many of our flocks, through a disposition to roam, or in a vain search of more luxuriant pastures, will be seduced to wander from our folds.

It were indeed to be wished that believers

would attend the canonical hours of divine worship, and devote the remainder of the day to the private duties of religion, and to those innocent recreations so necessary to the refreshment of nature. In privacy and retirement, in devout reading, meditation and prayer, the soul disengages itself from the grovelling objects of the world, and increases in that penitence and faith, that relish for spiritual things, which become the aspirants to a blessed immortality. But little can he know of the human heart, who expects that the bulk of professing Christians will employ their sabbath leisure in so useful and holy a manner. Allured by the dreams of pleasure, immersed in the pursuits of business or ambition, the greater part of mankind occupy but few of those sacred hours in preparation for that moment which must launch them into eternity. Some mitigation of this evil is provided by evening lectures, whither numbers are attracted, to whom, whatever may be the motive of resorting there, some good impressions are generally imparted, and of whom many would otherwise waste the precious time in thoughtless mirth, or unhallowed indulgences. When it is considered that multitudes go to the lecture who would else devote the evening to pleasure or vice; and that still more receive spiritual instruction, which they would else neglect, we must needs approve of those services, though

attended with some disadvantages, by which the profligate are invited to repentance, the thoughtless are reminded, the negligent are stirred up, and a tribute of praise and worship is offered to the Creator.

It was very generally the custom of the primitive Christians to hold their religious assemblies in the night-time. But their example in this particular instance is the less applicable to us, inasmuch as they were compelled to it through the violent persecutions of those times. They met in the morning before day-break, or in the evening after sun-set, and in these assemblies the Scriptures were read, prayers offered up, discourses delivered, and all the sacred rites of the new religion were performed. Though it was necessity which at first gave rise to this practice, it was continued in after ages, partly out of convenience, partly from an honest intention of keeping alive the flame of devotion, and partly from that spirit of ascetic and monastic piety which began to creep in at an early period of the church. These nocturnal assemblies gave occasion to the enemies of the faith to calumniate and asperse the Christians, as practising deeds which were only fit to be veiled under the cloak of darkness. The truth is, that their meetings being regulated according to circumstances, varied in different places; and therefore, while their

authority fully recognizes the duty of public worship, it cannot fairly be extended to the hour and place of assembling [m].

But to whatever conclusion we may come respecting the utility of sunday evening lectures, the obligation and benefit of public worship are clearly deducible from the divine records of Christianity. Yet it is but too common to hear the most vain and idle pretences alleged, to varnish over the neglect of a duty, ascertained by many express injunctions of Scripture, by the prohibition not to forsake the assembling ourselves together, by the example of our Saviour, of the apostles, of the martyrs; by the propriety of joining the faithful in the participation of the holy sacraments, by the necessity of receiving the public instructions of the ministry, and by the happy effects which the proper performance of it never fails to produce upon the heart. No other service which gratitude inspires to the Creator so edifies and elevates the soul, as the mingling with our fellow-creatures in sacred communion with heaven. No other service is so well calculated, both to cherish in ourselves, and by the force of

[m] This subject is amply treated by Bingham, *Christian Antiq.* lib. iii. cap. ix. and x.; lib. xx. cap. ii. § 8, et seq. See also Mede, *Epist.* 66. in Works, p. 80; Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, P. 1. cap. vii.; Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. II. P. 2. cap. iv. § 8.

sympathy and example to excite in others, the warmest sentiments of piety. Nor should the force of example be forgotten; for, if we absent ourselves, without just cause, from the ministrations of the church, the thoughtless will thereby be confirmed in their levity, the profane in their impiety; and if the example of such neglect should become general, it would bring on, as its inevitable consequence, the decay of public worship, and along with it, of all true religion in the nation.

It is melancholy to reflect that so many, who bear the name of Christians, should act in direct opposition to a duty, not more profitable than delightful. Resenting even the imputation of infidelity, and professing a reverence for the truths of Revelation, they yet, without cause and without scruple, arbitrarily absent themselves from the house of God. The exercise required for the preservation of health, the relaxation necessary to the spirits, the little effect produced on the morals of those who frequent the sanctuary, the inutility of hearing doctrines and precepts which are universally received, the more advantageous employment of the time at home; these are the alleged grounds for non-attendance on public worship, and they are so futile, so easily repelled, that they must appear, upon a little consideration, to be nothing better than subterfuges.

A mere empty excuse, which those who utter it can scarcely believe in sincerity, will not extenuate the guilt of such as spurn the high privilege of worshipping God in the beauty of holiness. If we are commanded to offer up our adorations with all our hearts, and minds, and strength, nothing remains on our parts but unlimited obedience; and the strongest reason can alone form a justifiable plea even for its temporary neglect. How deeply criminal, then, are those who, for some silly diversion, some short-lived indulgence, or some pretence equally frivolous, refuse to join in the congregation of believers. This cannot, perhaps, be characterized as an irreligious age; but crowds are every where seen, who remain disobedient to the heavenly call; whom no advice, no persuasion, no example can induce to assemble in the temples of the Lord.

What a contrast to the spirit and practice of the primitive believers in Christianity, when, as Jerome observes, "the blood of our Lord and Saviour was yet warm, and the new faith yet fervent in the bosoms of believers[n]." Not contented with the private homage of piety, they were zealous and constant in attendance upon the solem-

[n] "Quando Domini nostri adhuc calebat cruor, et fervebat recens in credentibus fides." *Ep. ad Demet.*

nities of public worship. No worldly object, no personal engagement, nothing in short but sickness and absolute necessity, detained them from appearing in the public assemblies. Neither danger, nor difficulty, nor even persecution could abate their zeal for the public worship on the Lord's day; for when, in those calamitous times, they could not meet by day, they held nocturnal assemblies either early in the morning, or in the evening. No light excuses were then admitted for a voluntary absence from the congregation; but they thronged together in happy and delighted troops, excited by the hopes of spiritual blessings, and exulting in the opportunity of offering the tribute of adoring praise to the Supreme Lord[o].

With the duties of public prayer must be joined a due attention to the private offices of religion. There is not a more mistaken sentiment, though unhappily too common, than to imagine that we have fulfilled the obligations of the sabbath, when

[o] See the circumstantial account of their religious assemblies in Tertullian, *Apol.* § 39. Also Justin Martyr as before cited, p. 295. On the subject of divine worship in the primitive church, besides the ecclesiastical historians, see Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, P. 1. cap. vii.; Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, lib. xx. cap. ii.; Bishop White, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, p. 213, et seq.; Lord King, *Enquiry into the Primitive Church*, P. 2. cap. i. and ii.

we have assembled together in the courts of the Lord's house. An attendance on the public service of the church is indispensable; but the remaining portion of the sacred hours must also be disposed of in such a way as will perpetuate and confirm the devout impressions which are there made. It is not a part of the morning and evening that is to be sanctified by the grateful homage of man, but the whole day. Throughout each succeeding division it is to be kept holy, not indeed precisely in one and the same manner, but, however varied, that object is never to be lost sight of, and every inward meditation, and outward performance, every thought, word, and deed, should be inscribed with the character of holiness to the Lord. Even those moments which indulgent Providence allows for relaxation, must be given to such recreations alone as wear a complexion in some degree corresponding to the solemnity of a sacred festival. Of little avail will it be to visit the temple of God, if we carry not from thence feelings so refined, affections so warmed, and views so spiritualized, as will give a tone of piety to the heart during the remainder of the day, and throughout the week. The principles of Christian godliness are not to glide from the mind as soon as we have quitted the consecrated altar of the Deity. They must be carried away into retirement, into the

midst of our families and our homes, where the flame of devotion which has been kindled in the Lord's house, is to be kept alive by those holy exercises, which, under the divine blessing, may become effectual in enlivening our faith into a steady principle of action [p].

The private duties of the Lord's day may be described generally as all those pious exercises which contribute to the spiritual advancement of man, and for the practice of which the weekly rest furnishes the opportunity and the means.

To delineate them minutely, and to define their nature and limits is impossible, since they must of necessity vary according to the habits, and pursuits, and dispositions of men. It is but little accordant with wisdom to attempt a complete specification of those domestic and personal duties, which must be partly regulated by every person's own judgment and conscience. But without meaning to invade the privileges of Christian liberty, it may not be amiss to throw together a few reflections upon the private obligations of the sabbath, as they respect families individually and collectively.

Among the most important of the religious

[p] Cultus Deorum est optumus idemque castissimus atque sanctissimus plenissimusque pietatis, ut eos semper pura, integra, incorrupta et mente et voce veneremur. Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* lib. ii. cap. xxviii. ed. Davies.

duties which every one is bound to perform in secrecy, is private prayer; the devout practice of which, as it is incumbent every day of the week, so is it particularly on the Lord's. It is a necessary preparation in order that we may profit to the full extent by the public means of grace. Our minds must be disposed by secret prayer for the high and heavenly purposes for which we enter the sanctuary, or the celestial seed there sown will be scattered upon a barren and unproductive soil; and, when we retire, we must seek in humble supplication for the dew of the divine blessing, without which the good seed will never ripen into the fruits of righteousness. By these means alone can we secure the spiritual advantages of an attendance on the public ministrations of religion, or return to our homes with the answer of a good conscience towards God. There are many things peculiar to every individual's own case, many sins to bewail, many blessings to ask, many special favours to acknowledge, which, as they cannot be mentioned with propriety in the hearing of others, must form the subject of supplication and thanksgiving in the retirement of the closet. The pouring out our personal wants in secret, attended, as it ever must be, by reflections and feelings the most interesting, produces a warmth and earnestness of supplication, which grow more ardent the nearer the heart is drawn

to its Creator. In privacy the pious soul may give a loose to all the fervours of devotion, which in the presence of the congregation, would be indecorous, and subject the worshipper to the imputation of doing it to be seen of men. Under the inspection of no eye but that of God, who spies out all our ways, and understands our thoughts long before they are conceived, the more fervent our devotions, the more acceptable they are, because as hypocrisy would be useless, they must originate in earnestness and sincerity. The specious dissembler, and the self-righteous formalist, are strangers to that secret devotion which seeks no witness but approving heaven, and which, unobserved by human gaze, maintains a high and spiritual intercourse with the great First Cause.

The value of private prayer is proved by its influence in deepening the impressions of religion on the mind. The intensity of feeling, of thought, of recollection, which attends the right performance of it, is calculated to rivet the attention upon things divine and immortal. The imagination is elevated with awful ideas of the power, majesty, and goodness of the Deity, who dwells in unutterable glory, possessed of infinite and eternal perfections, of dominion before which the most exalted of created intelligences must bow, of holiness so immaculate, that the heaven of heavens

are not pure in his sight, yet overlooks not the children of the dust, but condescends to dwell with the humble and contrite. Ideas so lofty, and contemplations so awakening, leave a vividness and solemnity upon the mind which will seldom expire with the utterance of the prayer that gave them birth. In the secret breathing of the soul to God, every object which is presented, and every sentiment which is excited, tends to foster the devout affections, and thereby to confirm the principles of piety in the heart. By an acknowledgment of our wants, weakness, and transgressions, we feel our dependence upon God: our souls are bent with a deep and reverential humility, and, convinced of our own frailty and imperfections, we perceive both the necessity of divine grace, and the worth of the Redeemer's sacrifice. Fully impressed with this belief, we are melted into a deeper gratitude for the mercies of salvation, into a warmer love to God, into a sincerer attachment to the truths of revelation, which must have a corresponding influence on the conduct. And this effect is powerfully assisted by the solitude to which the petitioner retires, and which, by its freedom from the distraction of external objects, is adapted to feed the flame of pure, spiritual, and hallowed devotion. "Solitude, (says Blair,) is the hallowed ground which religion hath in every age chosen as her own. There

her inspiration is felt, and her secret mysteries elevate the soul."

Private prayer, in addition to many advantages not attainable in public worship, is urged in the sacred oracles as an indispensable duty. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly[q]." Much encouragement is afforded by the practice of the patriarchs and saints recorded in the sacred history. Jacob made a vow to God at Bethel[r]; David prayed at morn, at noon, and at evening[s]; Daniel was constant in supplication[t]; and mention is made of the private devotions of St. Paul, St. Peter, and Cornelius[u]. It receives a superior sanction from the example of our blessed Lord, who frequently retired to solitude to hold communion with the Father[x]. Secret prayer, then, is never to be omitted, especially on that day which Jehovah has claimed for his own immediate worship. Whether the Christian fills the highest rank, or moves in the bustle of a busy world, or lives in the peaceful vale of retirement, he must

[q] Matt. vi. 6.
[r] Gen. xxviii. 20.
[s] Ps. lv. 17.
[t] Dan. vi. 11.
[u] Acts ix. 11.--x. 9, 30.
[x] Matt. xiv. 23.—xxvi. 36. Mark i. 35. Luke vi. 12.

not neglect the duties of solitude. They are efficacious means of that grace, of which they are the most incontestible evidence. Without the regular practice of the silent unobserved devotion of the closet, the spirit of genuine religion will evaporate. The holy principles of faith which have been planted by the external ministration of the Word, will be extinguished by the cares, and pleasures, and attractions of the world, unless they are kept alive by private prayer and meditation. It is in these devout offices of privacy that our hopes are enlivened, our thoughts sobered, our passions chastised, our resolutions strengthened, our faith confirmed. We return from this delightful communion with God, invigorated and refreshed for the discharge of every duty. Retirement devoutly improved supplies nutriment to the Christian graces, which else would languish and die. It raises the soul above all low-born cares and anxieties about temporal things, and causes an evenness of temper, a charitableness of disposition, and a purity of mind, which form the fruits and ornaments of a life of faith. Without prayer we cannot be Christians, and those who are in earnest to hold fast the belief into which they have been baptized, and are sincerely desirous of making it the rule of their conduct through the blessing of heaven, ought to practise it with punctuality and zeal in the silent hours of retirement.

But essential as secret prayer is to genuine religion, there are not wanting impediments, which, in too many instances, combine to interrupt or prevent its performance. Nature is of itself reluctant towards a duty which, by teaching the littleness of humanity, and its dependance upon heavenly aid for strength, strips it of the robe of proud self-sufficiency. The cares, and business, and pleasures of the world seize upon the thoughts, till the mind is often too much abstracted by their fascinations to give heed to things spiritual and divine. The oppositions which are without, and the temptations which are within, continually allure and distract, while the apostate spirit, in malignant enmity to man, uses every artifice to withdraw him from the service of God. The zeal and fervour of our devotions will sometimes engender a Pharisaic pride; and the very regularity of their performance is apt to produce indifference and formality. A latent persuasion also will occasionally force itself upon the mind, that, as God searches the heart, if sincere piety be there, all outward expressions of it are superfluous.

To surmount these obstacles, and to bow the knee in private prayer, without wandering or lukewarmness, requires constancy and resolution; but where these exist, it is one of the most efficacious means of ratifying the union of the soul

with its Creator. A reward of sufficient magnitude is held out for the sincere devotion of privacy, both in its efficacy as the preservative of true religion, and in the promise of our Redeemer, that the Father, who seeth in secret, will reward it openly [y]. For all the difficulties and resistancies with which we may have to struggle in the execution of this duty, there will be an adequate return, a gracious retribution, if not in this stage of being, certainly in another, and openly before men and angels. The prayers of Cornelius came up for a memorial before God [z]; and those of the faithful Christian will ascend as a cloud of incense to the throne of the Most High. Every tear of penitent sorrow, every secret ejaculation of piety, every hidden aspiration of the heart to its Maker, will augment the brilliancy of the heavenly crown. Encouraged by such benignant promises, it ought to be our fixed, unalterable resolve, whatever impediments may obstruct, to persevere in pouring out earnest and frequent addresses to our Almighty Father. The same mind should be in us which was in Christ Jesus, who upon all occasions displayed a deep, fixed, and unceasing piety. He frequently betook himself to visible devotion, retiring to the lonely mount, or solitary plain, where, apart from his companions, he spent whole

[y] Matt. vi. 6. [z] Acts x. 4.

nights in prayer. "Let all who feel their hearts impregnated with religious fervour, remember this example; remember that this disposition of the heart ought to vent itself in actual prayer; let them not either be afraid nor ashamed, nor suffer any person, nor any thing, to keep them from this holy exercise. They will find the devout dispositions of their souls strengthened, gratified, confirmed[a]."

As the sacred Scriptures do not say whether extemporaneous or pre-composed prayers are to be used, the Christian is at liberty to choose either, or both, according as he may deem it most to his personal advantage. With respect to the frequency of private prayer, the Scriptures are equally silent. The morning, indeed, when we rise from the repose of sleep to the engagements of the day, and the evening, when these engagements are over, appear the fittest seasons for the regular exercises of private devotion; but a mind deeply imbued with piety will, at other times of the day, as occasion offers, devote a few moments to so holy and refreshing a purpose. The truth, however, is, the sacred Scriptures give no particular directions as to the frequency, and the length of private prayer; nor does our apostolical church

[a] Dr. Paley, in his admirable Sermon on "Prayer in imitation of Christ."

assume the power to determine them. While they declare that every believer is bound to this duty by the most sacred obligations, they leave him to perform it in the way which he esteems most conducive to his spiritual good. We may, therefore, advise, we may recommend certain modes and times, but to urge them as a plain duty is to infringe the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. They are matters which must in part be accommodated to personal feelings and convenience; but he who is sincerely anxious to comply with the Scriptural admonitions to "pray always," to "pray without ceasing," and to "continue instant in prayer," will ever, even in the busiest life, find leisure for secret devotion. If there be only a fervent desire, opportunities will not be wanting. And in the discharge of this duty, the errors to be guarded against are, ostentation on the one hand, and a self-righteous spirit on the other. When the least particle of parade mingles with our prayers, or whenever they nourish the propensity to which human nature is too prone, of deeming ourselves holier than others, our offerings are a polluted service, and we come under the condemnation of those hypocrites who have received their reward[b]. Private devotion must be exercised in the strictest

[b] Matt. vi. 5.

secrecy, withdrawn from the eye of the world, and with fervour, with humility, with singleness of heart; and whenever we kneel down under the influence of these feelings, God, without being extreme to mark either our errors, or our ignorance in asking, will graciously accept the homage of our humbled souls.

Private prayer is the best preparative for the profitable discharge of another important duty,—the perusal of the sacred Scriptures. Other books will entertain, will gratify curiosity, will delight the imagination, will warm the affections; they may even do more; they may afford instruction, enlighten the understanding, exalt the sentiments, and improve the heart; but the Bible, and the Bible alone, contains the words of eternal life. To expatiate on this topic, however delightful and interesting, is the less needful, as no sound Protestant will dispute the excellence or the sufficiency of the inspired Writings. But the question with which we are now concerned is, whether believers in their divine origin are under any *moral* or *religious obligation* to the frequent perusal of them.

That it is not a commanded duty, has been often asserted, even by Protestant writers[c]; and

[c] Doederlein unhesitatingly declares, "Lectio Scripturæ Sacræ per se quidem nec necessaria est cuivis homini Christiano

I am free to admit that it is frequently attempted to be supported by a line of argument strikingly fallacious. As for example, it is argued that Christians are bound to read the sacred Oracles, because they are the celestial fountain of our faith, and the standard of all moral and religious practice; which appears just as absurd as it would be to infer the necessity of reading the statutes at large, because they regulate the conduct of men in their civil and political relations. Another argument echoed from mouth to mouth, and copied from book to book in endless succession, is taken from the many benefits which are supposed to accrue from reverently perusing the Bible: but this seems nothing else than that species of argument called *a begging of the question:* for, though Protestants, with few exceptions, are convinced of these benefits, the Romanists will not allow them. And, could they be proved to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind, they would not be conclusive; since many advantages arise from the reading of various publications, yet the perusal of them cannot, on this account, be represented as a religious obligation. It has also

ad discendam religionem, *nec ulla lege Novi Testamenti jubetur, nisi doctoribus Ecclesiæ:* valde tamen commendari meretur, dummodo in usu populari nec singulas utriusque Testamenti particulas, parum sæpe utiles, nec quamcumque translationem temere et promiscue perlegant." *Instit. Theol. Christ.* § 50.

been said, that, if it has pleased the Almighty to bestow upon mankind a revelation of his will, it becomes their duty to investigate what is thus made known to them. But this is as little satisfactory as the former; for, since the revelation is entrusted to the church, it may only be designed that the truths which it contains should be dispensed through the medium of an established ministry, just as the law of the land, in which all subjects have an interest, is administered by a body of men appropriated to that office.

No argument, as it should seem, independent of Revelation, can prove the regular perusal of it to be incumbent upon believers, inasmuch as Revelation alone can inform us, whether it was given for the guidance of all *immediately*, or *mediately* through the instruction of those who are appointed to minister in spiritual things. It affords, however, convincing evidence that those to whom it is communicated are bound, by the strongest obligations, to search and read its sacred records. The Jews were strictly enjoined to meditate on the law of God [d]; and *a fortiori* believers in our Redeemer must be obligated to study the Christian Scriptures. Our blessed Lord approved of the practice, as is clear from the injunction which he gave his disciples to "search the Scriptures,"

[d] Deut. vi. 6—8; xi. 18—21. Josh. i. 8. Ps. i. 2.

for, if the original be rendered, not imperatively as in the authorized version, but indicatively, "ye search the Scriptures," as some prefer, the words still imply his approbation [e]. He constantly referred, in his conferences with the people, to the authority of the Scriptures, which presumes a familiar acquaintance with them on the part of his followers [f]. The practice of reading the Scriptures is mentioned by the Apostles with applause and commendation. Thus Timothy is praised because "that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures [g]," and this before he was ordained to the ministry. The Bereans are said to be "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so [h]." There are also express declarations, which evince the duty of perusing the Scriptures, but which, for brevity's sake, I shall merely refer to in the margin [i]. An argu-

[e] John v. 39. The indicative sense is supported by Le Clerc, Bengel, Wolfius, Hackspann, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, Campbell, Lampe, A. Clarke, Schott, Tittmann, &c.

[f] Matt. xxi. 42; xxii. 29; xxvi. 54. Luke xvi. 29. John ii. 22; vii. 38, 42.

[g] 2 Tim. iii. 15.

[h] Acts xvii. 11.

[i] Luke i. 1—4. John xx. 31. Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. i. 2; x. 11. Col. iv. 16. 1 Thes. v. 27. 2 Pet. iii. 1. 1 John ii. 1. Jude 3. Rev. i. 3.

ment equally strong arises from the mode in which the Apostles addressed their epistles. These were directed to "all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:" "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord:" "To the faithful in Christ Jesus:" "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia [k]." These expressions, and similar ones in other epistles, include every Christian; and since the Scriptures were thus directed to all, the laity as well as the clergy, an obligation is laid upon all to search and examine them.

The reading of the Scriptures by the people is sanctioned by the authority and example of the primitive church. All ranks were allowed the use of the Bible; and when, in times of persecution, the believers were ordered to deliver up their copies to be burnt, many of both sexes chose rather to suffer death than to part with them. In the earliest ages of our religion the Scriptures were translated into the vernacular languages for the use and instruction of the people. That all the faithful in the primitive times were not only allowed the use of, but were exhorted to peruse

[k] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 2. Ephes. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1.

the Bible, is an indisputable fact; and it strongly marks the utility of placing the Scriptures, along with proper guidance, in the hands of all believers [1].

[1] The universal use of the Bible in the primitive church is proved by Dr. Scott, *Christian Life*, vol. v. Diss. 4; Du Pin, *Prolegomenes sur la Bible*, lib. i. cap. ix. §. 1, et seq.; Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, lib. xiii. cap. iv. §. 8. The duty of reading the Scriptures is well elucidated, and objections answered, by Dr. Scott, *Christian Life*, ibid.; Secker, *Five Sermons on Scripture*; and Du Pin in loc. citato, who says, in speaking of the books of the New Testament, "Il n'est pas permis à un Chrêtien de les ignorer." What would a Protestant desire more? See also Viser, *Hermeneut. Sac.* in Prænot. The strong attestations of the celebrated Father Quesnel in favour of reading the Scriptures, have been often cited; and many individuals of the Romish persuasion promote the diffusion of the Bible. Numerous editions have been printed for the use of the Roman Catholics in France, Germany, and the British Dominions; the decree in the 4th Session of the Council of Trent respecting the use of the Scriptures, is easily reconcileable with the general circulation of them; and it requires no great ingenuity to evade the restriction imposed by the Bull *Unigenitus;* nor can I find that it forms any part of the Roman Catholic religion to prohibit the reading of the Scriptures in an authorized translation: yet the Romish Hierarchy, it is too evident to be denied, do discourage the *general* use of them. (See *History of the Jesuits*, vol. i. p. 355, et seq.; vol. ii. p. 401, et seq. 8vo. Lond. 1816.) In perusing the sarcasms at "Bible-reading," and the invectives against "Bible-Christians" and "Bible-men," which have been lately vented in speeches and pamphlets by Roman Catholics in the sister kingdom, one might suppose oneself carried back to the darkest ages of the church. The reason of this conduct in

To read, then, and meditate in the volume of inspiration, is an important duty; but much embarrassment, it is true, will often arise in the execution of it, principally owing to those difficulties, the existence of which is owned by every sober-minded scholar. The sacred records were composed by various persons in remote periods, and in different countries, the necessary result of which is a great diversity of style, imagery, and manner, and a consequent difficulty of interpretation. They are written in three languages, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek; not Greek in its purity, but idiomatical, sometimes not improperly called Hellenistical; and, as they have long since ceased to be spoken, except in a corrupt dialect, they cannot be exempt from those doubts and obscurities which attend all dead languages. There are numerous allusions to manners, customs, and opinions, very different from our own,

the Roman Catholic priesthood, will readily be perceived by the Biblical student; but if the Scriptures were given to ALL, "to wrest the New Testament out of the hands of Christians, or to keep it closed up, is," as the pious Quesnel observes, "to shut the mouth of Christ in respect of them." At the same time I am as fully convinced as the most zealous Romanists, that the indiscriminate perusal of the Bible alone, without note or comment, will never make men wise unto salvation; and that in order to read it PROFITABLY, all the *external helps* must be applied, which are required by the institutions of Christ, and by the nature of the inspired records themselves.

with many of which we are imperfectly acquainted, so that it is no easy matter to place ourselves in the situation of the several writers, to enter into their views, to appreciate their feelings, to see their drift, and to comprehend their reasonings. Difficulties also arise from the subjects treated of in the sacred writings: historical, prophetical, poetical, religious; commencing with the creation and fall of man, and developing a scheme of redemption of such stupendous magnitude and awful mysteriousness, as, in all its parts and bearings, to be above the comprehension of the human intellect. From these causes it must often happen that some things will, upon a cursory view, appear contradictory to our notions; some irreconcileable to each other; and some inexplicably dark and obscure.

Hence there must, in the nature of things, be obscurities in the Bible, and many difficulties must, of necessity, be encountered in its exposition; but this forms no ground of rational objection; for it could not be otherwise without the operation of a continued miracle; and these difficulties, moreover, are attended with several advantages. They form the best internal arguments in favour of Revelation, since they constitute those characteristic features which fix the composition of the sacred Scriptures to the particular persons and periods to which they are

assigned. Scripture difficulties likewise stimulate inquiry; contribute to the improvement of man's rational nature, by exercising the understanding; and afford renewed confirmation of our sinking and wavering faith by their elucidation. And it must not be forgotten, that, amongst the various difficulties with which the Scriptures are acknowledged to abound, there are none which, to a candid mind, will lead to any immorality, or any dangerous error; and that the Bible is sufficiently clear upon all the fundamentals of religion to every willing and ordinary capacity [m].

As difficulties, then, must exist, and are reconcileable with the perfection and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, it cannot be derogatory to them to assert that external helps are required for surmounting these obstacles. They "are able to make us wise unto salvation;" but not without we study them with suitable dispositions, and use all necessary means for the explanation of their sacred contents. The Eunuch confessed that he could not understand what he read, except some man should guide him, and gladly received the instruction of Philip [n]. The admonitions against "false teachers," against "corrupting the word

[m] See Benson's valuable *Hulsean Lectures on Scripture Difficulties.*

[n] Acts viii. 26, et seq.

of God," against "handling the word of God deceitfully," against those who "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction," against those "who concerning the truth have erred," against those "who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," plainly imply that, without due care and caution, the sacred Writings themselves may be perverted[o]. The establishment of a standing ministry by Christ, is satisfactory evidence, that some guidance is necessary to the proper understanding of the Scriptures. The appointment itself of the priesthood, implies that something beyond the mere circulation of the LETTER is requisite for the propagation of genuine Christianity in the world; and the same truth may be inferred from the want of systematic arrangement in the Scriptures themselves. Every attentive reader of them must be struck with the circumstance of the Christian doctrines being oftener *indirectly* taught than *expressly* delivered. Owing to this absence of system, though perfect and sufficient as a rule of faith, they are deficient as to the first teaching of the articles of our creed; from which it follows that the disciples of Christ have need of external assistance in learning the truths therein

[o] 2 Pet. ii. 1. 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 16. 2 Tim. ii. 18. Tit. i. 11.

communicated. The Word of God contains all things necessary to salvation; but it is at the same time requisite to use the means of explaining and enforcing it, which are provided in the church of Christ, lest either the weak, or the ignorant, or the wicked, should "wrest it to their own destruction." What can be more absurd than to put into the reader's hands a book, allowed to be the only guide to heaven and immortality, and yet confessedly of most difficult interpretation, without also furnishing him with the means of understanding it? "The idea that the bible is easily understood, flatters the self-sufficiency of ignorance and fanaticism; but the great difficulty attending its interpretation, is a fact too palpable to be denied, except by those who are benighted in the mists of prejudice, or who have never doubted, only because they have never inquired [p]." Those who devoutly read the sacred Scriptures, and reflect seriously upon what they read, will not deny the necessity of external guidance, a truth acknowledged in all ages, from the composers of the primitive creeds, down to our venerable reformers, who thought it requisite to accompany the Bible with articles and a liturgy.

Ascending from Christian individuals to Christian societies, we shall find reason to believe that

[p] *Prel. Diss. to Eccles.* p. 1.

no church can safely reject all external aid, in what it inculcates upon the members of its communion. The Church of England lays the grand foundation of her faith upon holy Scripture, which she pronounces, in her sixth Article, to contain all things necessary to salvation; but at the same time, as Bishop Jebb observes, "she inculcates a liberal, discriminative, yet undeviating reverence for pious antiquity: a reverence, alike sanctioned by reason, inspired by feeling, and recommended by authority. This principle is, in truth, our special characteristic: a principle which has ever enabled our church to combine discursiveness with consistency; freedom of inquiry, with orthodoxy of belief; and vigorous good sense, with primitive and elevated piety[q]." While the church of Rome maintains two equal and independent authorities for doctrines, Scripture and Tradition, the Anglican church founds her doctrines on the sole authority of Scripture, taking antiquity only

[q] Bishop Jebb, *Sermons*, Append. p. 357. See Dr. Gray, *Bampt. Lectures*, Serm. 5; Bishop White, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, p. 11, 12. Compare Bishop Marsh, *Comparative View;* and see some excellent observations in Hawkins, *Dissertation on the use and importance of unauthoritative Tradition*: also consult Brett, *Tradition necessary to understand the Scriptures*. Those who desire to learn what an ingenious Romanist says respecting tradition, may peruse Bossuet, *Defense de la Tradition et des Saintes Peres*. 2 vols. 12mo. Paris. 1763.

as a handmaid for assisting in the interpretation of the word of God, and for guidance in matters pertaining to discipline and ceremonies. The former regards tradition as co-equal with, and in some respects paramount to, Scripture; the latter, though preserving a proper respect for tradition, will only allow it to be subordinate and subservient. In this she has steered a wise and prudent course between the extremes of papal adherence to tradition, and the unbounded licence of interpretation, indulged by some foreign branches of the Reformation; thus escaping the evils both of blind submission to authority, and of that unlimited freedom of private interpretation, from the levelling principle of which have arisen innumerable wild fanatical conceits, and a host of sectarian errors.

The church of Rome having founded most of her peculiar dogmas upon tradition, many Protestants, in their eagerness to mark their abhorrence of popery, have gone into the opposite extreme of discarding tradition altogether. That this has been followed by very pernicious effects, will be acknowledged by those who are acquainted with the history of biblical interpretation since the Reformation. To reject the authority of the ancient, venerable, universal church, is to reject the most rational guide to the Christian faith. Even Chillingworth, whose principles were

latitudinarian, declares that the supporters of the reformed religion "are ready to receive both Scripture, and the sense of Scripture, upon the authority of *original tradition*[r]." The deference which the ancient fathers paid to tradition, must be evident to every one who has examined their writings. They coincide in the sentiment delivered in a well-known passage of Vincentius Lirinensis where it is declared, that "Whoever wishes to remain sound and whole in the true faith, must, through the Divine assistance, fortify his faith in a two-fold manner; first, by the authority of the Divine law, and next by the tradition of the catholic church[s]." Our own apostolical

[r] Chillingworth, *Relig. of Prot.* Answer to cap. ii. §. 89. See also Answer to cap. iii. §. 44, et seq. To avoid confusion in reasoning upon this subject, theologians have divided tradition into three kinds, *historic*, *ritual*, and *dogmatic*; the last being again subdivided into *hermeneutic tradition* and *dogmatic* properly so called, or *doctrinal*. (Doederlein, *Instit. Theol. Christ.* § 57. et seq.) We are only at present concerned with the *dogmatic*, including the *tradition of interpretations*, and the *tradition of doctrines*, which we affirm to be one of the best guides to scriptural religion. The fundamental error of the church of Rome is, that she receives tradition as *a rule of faith co-equal* with the Scriptures.

[s] "Sive ego, sive quis alius vellet exurgentium hæreticorum fraudes deprehendere, laqueosque vitare, et in fide sana sanus atque integer permanere, duplici modo, munire fidem suam, Domino adjuvante, deberet: primo scilicet, Divinæ Legis auctoritate; tum deinde Ecclesiæ Catholicæ traditione." Vincentius, *Advers. Hæres.* cap. i. edit. Baluz.

church reveres pure and primitive antiquity, next to the holy Scriptures, as is evident from her incomparable liturgy, derived chiefly from the actual forms of the ancient church, and from her constantly referring to the ancient fathers as witnesses to the Christian doctrine and worship [t]. The idea of making Scripture its own interpreter, without the admission of foreign help, is one of those modern whims, from which have arisen a multiplicity of opinions, agreeing in nothing but their heterodoxy. In consequence of the many difficulties which Providence has seen fit to admit into the records of revealed truth, some external guidance is necessary to their profitable perusal; and it is agreeable to right reason to look for it, in the first place, in the traditionary instruction of the church, to which the Scriptures are entrusted as a sacred deposit, and in which there has been a constant succession of Christian teachers.

The institution of a standing order of ministers by our Lord, points them out to be the delegated interpreters of the sacred Books. To this office they are called by virtue of their commission to teach all nations whatsoever our Saviour

[t] See *Article* 20; *Prefaces to the Book of Common Prayer; Homilies* passim; *Preface to the Ordaining of Bishops*, &c.

hath commanded [u]. The power of binding and loosing conferred upon the Apostles, must be extended to their successors, the ministers and governors of the church, and by these expressions it is generally allowed, we are to understand, at least in part, an authority to declare the doctrines of Christianity [x]. Their office as Christian teachers is recognized by the Apostle when he asserts that Christ "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ [y]." When St. Paul says to Timothy, "I besought thee to abide still in Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine," it is evident that Timothy was invested with a power to regulate the faith of the Ephesian churches, over which he was appointed to preside [z]; and the same thing with respect to those in Crete is implied in the admonition to Titus, who was bishop there; "a man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject [a]." By the description of what a

[u] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 2; iv. 11; vi. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. ii. 1.

[x] Matt. xviii. 18. Compare ch. xvi. 19.

[y] Ephes. iv. 11, 12.

[z] 1 Tim. i. 3.

[a] Titus iii. 10.

bishop ought to be; "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers;" and by the direction to Timothy; "the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also;" we are led to consider the Christian ministry as intended to be the guardians of Christian truth[b]. The apostle thus writes to the Hebrews: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever[c]." The disciples of Christ are here enjoined to continue in the truth which they receive from their spiritual teachers and governors.

From these passages it may assuredly be gathered that the Christian ministry are the depositories of sacred truth, which they are appointed to preserve, and faithfully to promulge. They are intended by Divine Providence to be the legitimate interpreters and expounders of holy writ, and to afford that assistance in learning the truth as it is in Jesus, which, from the nature of the

[b] Titus i. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

[c] Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

inspired records, the great body of believers must ever stand in need. But this duty imposed upon the ministers of religion, creates a corresponding duty in the people. If the former are appointed "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," the latter are to pay them due respect, to receive instruction at their hands, and to reverence every lawful exercise of the authority with which Christ has invested them. The true disciples, firm in their allegiance to Him who is the Head of the church, will not lightly reject the teaching of the ambassadors of Christ, the ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God[d]; nor will they contemn the authority of "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth[e]."

Many licentious and ungovernable spirits there are, who spurn all church authority as a spiritual thraldom, to which they disdain to be in bondage. With men of this stamp, who are too self-sufficient to seek instruction from others, too rebellious to yield submission to the powers that be,

[d] 2 Cor. v. 20. 1 Cor. iv. 1.

[e] 1 Tim. iii. 15. Griesbach, Bengel, Rosenmüller, Heinrichs (*in edit. N. T. Koppiana,*) and Valckenaar, (*Selecta e Scholis,* vol. ii. p. 223,) disjoin these two clauses, making a new sentence to commence with "the pillar and ground of the truth," but, in my judgment, improperly.

and too exalted in their own conceits to be open to conviction, I do not mean to hold disputation: I address myself to those of a more sober mind, and more teachable disposition; who submit to propagate the gospel according to the plan of discipline and government instituted by its divine Author. The commission given to the apostles by our blessed Lord was to *preach* the gospel to every creature[f]; and in virtue of this authority committed to them, they appointed others to publish the doctrines of their Master, who, in like manner, were empowered to ordain successors in the same office. Christ has promised to be present by his especial favour and grace, with his visible church, even unto the end of the world[g]. Any attempt, therefore, to disseminate the saving truths of religion, either by the mere perusal, or the mere circulation of the bible, are contrary to the method set on foot by our Redeemer, for promoting the knowledge of the Lord in the heart, and in the world. If it is not necessary to listen with due submission to the dictates of the church, why did he erect a visible church on earth? If it is not necessary to *instruct* believers, why did he institute an order of ministers, with an injunction that it should be perpetuated? The church, then, "hath power to decree rites and ceremonies,

[f] Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15.

[g] Matt. xxviii. 20.

and authority in controversies of faith," so far as it may go in accordance with God's written word [h].

As the church, within these limits, has authority in all matters relating to the Christian faith, the believer is, in every case of difficulty, first to consult her as the faithful depository of true religion. The church may be understood both in a restricted, and a more enlarged sense, either as denoting a national and particular church, or as designating the one universal Catholic church of Christ, composed of many branches, situate in different countries, and consisting of various nations and languages, which has existed from the beginning, and will continue to exist to the end of time. I speak only of the visible church, not of that which is the mystical body of Christ, which is not an object of sense, which is a society distinguished by characters manifest only to the great Searcher of hearts, and some of whose members are already in heaven with Christ [i]. Now those who read the bible with a view to spiritual edification, ought to consult the church in the first sense, namely, the ecclesiastical communion to which they belong, and the decisions of which are to be found in its authorized articles and formularies. If qualified by abilities and literary

[h] *Church Article*, 20.

[i] See Hooker, *Eccles. Polity*, lib. iii. cap. i.

acquirements, they are next to collect the judgment of the universal church of God, and to investigate what has been the recorded belief from the first ages of pious antiquity, down to those of barbarity and darkness.

Instances will often occur where the sense of the church cannot be collected from her public formularies, and recognized decisions; and in such cases recourse must be had to the assistance of the appointed ministry, whom she commissions to preach and explain the word of God. Qualified by education and discipline for this office, they must be supposed not only to be beyond others mighty in the Scriptures, but also to understand them in consistency with the general principles of the church, in which they are ordained to minister. The sentiments of the clerical body, then, though inferior to the public formularies of the church, are an authority of no inconsiderable weight, and to which, being so easily accessible, it is expedient to apply, whenever difficulties in religious matters arise. Those who regularly attend the ministrations of the clergy, will find most of their doubts, on points of importance at least, resolved; and if not, every zealous Clergyman will be glad to afford private advice and assistance in whatever relates to the spiritual concerns of his flock. The unlearned should pay the same deference to the judgment

of their teachers in matters of religion, as they do to that of lawyers and physicians in matters belonging to their professions. In the sense of difficult passages of Scripture, men of limited education should depend upon the instruction of those spiritual guides whom God has placed over them.

Such is the leading aid which the humble Christian will call to his assistance in studying the word of God; but it must ever be kept in mind that it is nothing more than an auxiliary. The sacred Scriptures are the source of all religious truth, and the authority of the church is only subsidiary to its investigation. Highly as it is to be prized, it is still to be esteemed in no other light than as the means of drawing the limpid waters from their pure, original, and celestial fountain. This is the doctrine and discipline of that sound branch of the apostolical church established in these realms. She proposes to assist, not to supersede the exercise of private judgment. Renouncing the presumptuous claim to infallibility she does not, like the church of Rome, require of her children a blind and bigoted subjection to her decrees; but she bids them use their own reason by an examination of Scripture, and an investigation of antiquity. While she affirms her entire accordance with the word of God, and with the best and purest ages of Christianity, she chal-

lenges inquiry, claiming, from her competent members, to compare her with that standard of evangelic truth, upon which alone it is her pride and glory to have founded her articles of faith.

Hence, in studying the sacred writings, the church is the best, though not an infallible guide; and every reflecting person will hesitate to interpret them in any sense contrary to that which has been put upon them by an authority, ordained by Christ, and to which he has promised his continued presence and protection[k]. Were the church a merely human constitution, a man of common candour must naturally distrust his own judgment, when it leads to conclusions opposed to those which have been approved by the most able, most judicious, and most enlightened characters in so many successive ages. It is much safer for men of ordinary capacities to adhere to the Established Church, than to forsake it on grounds in which there is so great a probability of their being mistaken. "When men err with their governors, they have this favourable plea on their side, that they were led into error by those whom God had placed over them; but when men forsake the truth and the church together, both these faults will be laid to their charge: first,

[k] Matt. xvi. 18; xxviii. 18—20. John xiv. 16; xvi. 13. Ephes. i. 23; v. 23—27. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

learning the truth, and embracing error; and then causelessly breaking the peace of the church[1]."

Still it may sometimes happen when the inquirer will see reason to differ from the avowed opinions of the church; and if he does so after mature deliberation, upon grounds which he deems perfectly satisfactory, the Christian law of liberty leaves him free to dissent. Great respect is due to the decisions of the church; but if, after making all possible enquiry, he cannot agree with them, his conscience is not under bonds. Ecclesiastical authority is not absolute, nor is it built upon any promise of infallibility. Every man must be left free and unshackled, to the enjoyment of religious liberty: but woe be to him who abuses so invaluable a privilege, by dissenting lightly and unreasonably from the Established Church.

Another requisite for the profitable reading of the Bible, is a competent store of those literary acquirements, without which it cannot be properly understood. The meaning of the divine records is to be discovered by much the same means as are employed in unfolding the sense of

[1] William Lowth, *Directions for Reading the Scriptures*, cap. iii. On the authority and constitution of the church, I would particularly recommend to the general reader Collinson's Abridgment of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

human productions; for which reason a degree of learning is required for their interpretation, far beyond what is possessed by a great part of those who assume to themselves the office of expounding and enforcing the word of God. To those even who, without pretending to a critical exposition of the Scriptures, and with due respect for the authority of the church, peruse them for their own spiritual edification, some preparatory knowledge is, if not absolutely requisite, certainly highly advantageous. Without some share of it the Bible will present the most formidable obstacles; and it will scarcely be possible to profit, to the full extent, by the works of those who have laboured in the popular illustration of the sacred Scriptures. It should, therefore, be the endeavour of every one who would reap all the benefits which the reading of the Bible can supply, to obtain the knowledge requisite for that purpose; and such are the facilities now afforded, that it is by no means a task of insuperable difficulty. Any person of ordinary capacity may, without any great labour, acquire sufficient for reading the Bible with intelligence; and if the perusal of it be a duty, as it assuredly is, it must likewise be a duty to provide what is necessary to its proper and advantageous performance.

What then are those literary helps which, in addition to the authority of the church, every

Christian in studying the Bible should use, as far as they are within his reach? They consist *primarily,* in the knowledge of the Biblical languages; of manuscripts, versions, history, chronology, geography, antiquities; of the subjects, style, arrangement, age, and authors of the sacred books; of the manners and customs of the times in which they were written; of criticism, and Biblical interpretation: and *secondarily,* in the commentaries and expositions which are derived from these sources of illustration. To give even a brief outline of these helps would require a treatise of itself; all that can now be done, consistently with the limits of these pages, is to point out a few publications in which the reader will find more ample information on the subject. Of these I know none better adapted for the poor than the Christian Knowledge Society's tract, entitled *Plain Directions for Reading the Holy Scriptures;* and none which can be more unreservedly recommended to readers in general, than Lowth's *Directions for the Profitable Reading of the Holy Scriptures;* Beausobre and L'Enfant's *Introduction to the New Testament;* Collyer's *Sacred Interpreter;* Gray's *Key to the Old Testament,* and Percy's *Key to the New Testament.* Frank's *Guide to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures,* translated by Jacques, is a very useful work; and there is also *A Scripture Help,*

designed to assist in Reading the Bible Profitably, by the Rev. E. Bickersteth, which has had a most extensive sale; but though it is in some respects very valuable, it is often lamentably deficient in judgment, and betrays a want of accurate information on the subject of which it treats. But the most luminous and comprehensive is the *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, by the Rev. T. H. Horne, 4 vols. 8vo. edit. 5, London, 1825, which both contains a vast mass of information, and refers to the principal writers on all matters connected with the illustration of the Bible.

To understand the sacred Writings, necessary as it must be confessed, is no farther valuable than as it becomes instrumental to its practical application to the heart and life. The deepest acquaintance with Biblical criticism, the most extensive knowledge of hermeneutic and dogmatic theology, will be of little avail in the sight of heaven, unless they have a corresponding effect upon the temper and disposition. Literary researches, in reference to the Scriptures, are liable, without caution, to beget pride and ostentation, and to encourage that knowledge which puffeth up, to the exclusion of that charity which edifieth [m]. A constant recurrence to critical points

[m] 1 Cor. viii. 1.

and controversial discussions is apt to have a benumbing effect upon the finer feelings, and to deaden the mind to the deep and awakening sentiments of piety. Literary engagement brings with it so many charms and attractions that, it is to be feared, it is sometimes pursued for its own sake, to the neglect of the weightier matters of practical religion. In this probationary state all have their trials, and these are the dangers to which the learned are exposed; but it would be unreasonable on that account to condemn the pursuit of theological knowledge. There is no native connection between ignorance and godliness; and it would be a marvellous incongruity with the light of the gospel, if the more learned we become, the farther are we off from real faith; if the more intellectual we grow, the less capable we become of spiritual discernment. It is more rational to believe that the heart is warmed and animated by the truths of Revelation, when the whole mind is engrossed in its contemplation. Moses was learned in the Egyptian, and Daniel in the Chaldean sciences; Solomon excelled all men in natural and moral wisdom; and St. Paul was instructed both in Grecian and Jewish knowledge. Men may abuse learning; but it may also be made to redound to the glory of God, and it is requisite to our becoming true scribes instructed to the kingdom of God. As literary pride, how-

ever, is insinuating and dangerous, it behoves the student to guard against its encroachment, and while engaged in the laudable study of the Scriptures, to cultivate that spirit of devotion, and those holy affections, by which the inward man is enlivened and spiritualized.

That we may become wiser and better by the lessons which the Bible teaches, we must read it with dispositions corresponding to the sacredness of the task in which we are engaged. All prejudices and partialities must be laid aside, and, disengaging the mind from every thing which blinds it against the perception of truth, we must cherish a spirit of candour and ingenuousness; not seeking for the confirmation of preconceived opinions, but submitting our opinions to the Volume of inspiration. If care is required for the profitable study of profane authors, much more so is it in perusing those writings which, from the supreme importance of the tidings they announce, merit all devotedness of attention. They must be read with the humility and reverence which become creatures listening to a communication graciously vouchsafed from their Creator. Every proud imagination must be cast down, every high and lofty thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and instead of exalting reason to be the arbitress of faith, we are to make reason subservient to a

just conception of the sacred message. The Bible also is to be read with self-application, so that its lessons may be brought home to every man's own case and conscience. They were not given merely to enlarge our speculative knowledge, but for our guide in life, and hence, comparing our lives and conversations with the standard of God's word, we are to practise what it commands, renounce what it prohibits, and, when it points out the path to heaven and happiness, we are earnestly to pursue it.

But after all, no spiritual advantage will be derived from the exercise, except the Holy Spirit enlighten the eyes of the understanding. Abilities the most splendid, and knowledge the most profound, will not of themselves avail in acquiring the wisdom that is from above. To the proper discernment of the mysteries of redemption, there must be superadded to all the human means of unfolding the mind of the Spirit, the co-operating influence of divine grace. For this grace, then, we should humbly yet devoutly supplicate, that we, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope," and that, drawing from thence the treasures of spiritual wisdom, we may be enabled to "walk worthy of the Lord, increasing in the knowledge of God[n]."

[n] Rom. xv. 4. Col. i. 10.

The necessity of divine assistance appears from several declarations of holy Writ. To some of these I will refer, that the reader may consult them at his leisure: Deut. xxix. 4. Ps. cxix, *passim.* Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Joel ii. 28, 29. Matt. xiii. 11. Luke xxiv. 45. John iii. 3; vi. 44, 45; vii. 17; xii. 37, 38, 39, 40; xvi. 13. Acts xvi. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 12—14; iv. 7; xii. 11. Ephes. i. 17, 18. 1 Thes. iv. 9. James i. 5. 1 John ii. 20—27; v. 20. These texts, though they by no means prove that for which they are sometimes cited, namely, the sufficiency of that aid which the Spirit supplies for understanding the Scriptures, without the application of human means, yet plainly imply the need of a spiritual illumination.

A fanatical notion is circulated by certain sectarians, and by some injudicious members of our own church, that nothing more is required for interpreting the Bible, than a supposed inward light, communicated by the Holy Spirit. Far be it from any Churchman to deny the necessity of Divine assistance; but it is in vain to expect it, except we use all the means and helps which are declared by common sense, and the nature of things, to be requisite for understanding the Bible. It is impossible to perceive, and to accept by faith, the words of eternal life, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, and working

with us[o]; but no greater degree of it is required for the study of the Scriptures, than for the performance of any other good work. As well might we expect to reap without sowing, as to interpret the Bible rightly without preparatory study. It is a fact amply verified by experience, that those who neglect the assistance of reason and learning, cannot be sound interpreters of the sacred Records. The influences of the Spirit are not represented as determining the judgment, without the exercise of the ordinary faculties of the mind: they do not preclude the use, but aid and assist the imperfections, of human reason. The Spirit accompanies the Gospel with his salutary influence, inclining the mind to the acknowledgment of the truth, and the heart to obedience; but he does not work irresistibly; and while he works effectually in them that desire to be saved, he gives light only to those who willingly open their eyes to perceive it. The fruits of the Spirit will not be wrought in us, if we neglect the outward means of grace. The one are as necessary as the other, and to rely upon either alone is a pernicious error, leading either into enthusiasm, or Pharisaical self-sufficiency.

But appeal has been made to the authority of Scripture, and the texts above referred to have

[o] *Church Article* 10.

been cited, as well as some others, to prove the sufficiency of the communicated light of the Spirit, independently of human reason. To examine these texts in detail, would lead to a lengthened discussion, which may be spared, as the distinction between the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit will afford an easy solution to whatever difficulties they may present. All those spiritual gifts which are promised to believers in general are of the former description; and, as they must be compatible with the free-agency of man, they will do no more than "work with us," which is so far from precluding our own exertions, that it necessarily pre-supposes our co-operation. The fulfilment of these promises must, therefore, be sought in the ordinary aids of the Holy Spirit, which are supplied to all who bring the requisite natural and acquired endowments to the elucidation of the Scriptures, and who seek truth with sincerity and faith. Few errors are so pernicious as the adoption of this fanatical principle, since it subverts the very foundation of the Protestant belief, the sufficiency and perfection of holy Scripture. We are taught to consider that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," that his "word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path," and that it is "able to make us wise unto salvation,

through faith which is in Christ Jesus[p]." But if the Bible be a sealed book without an inward and special illumination, it would be wholly inadequate "to make us wise unto salvation;" it would be chargeable with the absurdity of being a revelation, requiring an immediate revelation to understand it, and would be useless if the rich treasures it contains were not to be procured without the special teaching of the Spirit. The admission of such a principle, is setting up an infallible arbiter of Scripture, of much the same kind, though more dangerous, than the infallibility of the Church of Rome; for in attributing a divine illumination to private individuals, it constitutes them infallible interpreters; thus opening a door for all the wild phantasies of a distempered imagination, and all the senseless dotage of fanaticism; which the mind, in reviewing their dire effects in all ages, cannot but sicken to contemplate[q].

[p] Ps. xix. 7; cxix. 105. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

[q] The subject of the supposed inward light is touched with a masterly hand by Bishop Van Mildert, *Bampton Lect.* 3; but it is exposed at length, and the texts which give a colour to it vindicated, by Dr. Hammond, *Postscript concerning the New Light*, annexed to his *Annotations on the New Testament;* and still more completely by Dr. Bennet, *Confutation of Quakerism*, cap. i—xii. See also Hicks, *Enthusiasm Exorcised;* Buddeus, *Miscel. Sac.* vol. ii. P. 3, p. 137 et seq.; Rosenmüller, *Historia*

The Anglican church, it has been said, countenances the principle of an inward light, when she declares in the book of Homilies, after Chrysostom, "that man's human and worldly wisdom or science is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search therefore[r]." But taking this passage, as we ought, in connection with the scope of the argument, it will have a very different complexion; for this part of the Homily is a reply to the objections against reading the Scripture, on account of "the difficulty to understand it, and the hardness thereof;" and among many other things it is asserted, that he who applies to it "with diligent study and burning desire," will not be left without help, as either God "will send him some godly doctor to teach him," or, in defect of that, "God himself from above will give light unto our minds, and teach us those things which are necessary for us, and wherein we be ignorant." Then follows the passage first cited. The argument, therefore, amounts

Interpretationis, vol. i. p. 240, et seq. et *al;* Leslie, *Snake in the Grass*, sect. 5, 6, 7; and *Answer to the Switch*, &c. sect. i—vi.; Warburton, *Doctrine of Grace*, lib. iii. cap. ii.; Lloyd, *Christian Theology*, p. 331, et seq.; Stapfer, *Instit. Theol. Polemicæ*, cap. xiii. vol. iv. p. 338, et seq.

[r] *Homily on the Reading of Scripture*, Part 2.

to this; that none should be deterred from perusing the Scriptures, by the difficulties in them, since if they read with proper dispositions, they will not be left without help, either from competent teachers, or spiritual illumination. The use of human helps is not excluded, but rather enforced, inasmuch as the illumination of the Holy Ghost is only promised to inspire "the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search therefore."

I am not anxious, however, to defend all the expressions, reasonings, and interpretations in the Homilies, which, as a Churchman, I am only bound to believe "contain a goodly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for the times in which they were composed[s]." The doctrine of the Anglican church is that which I have been endeavouring to urge, the necessity of divine aid, and human exertion, in order to read the Scriptures with intelligence and effect. We beseech the Almighty to "grant that we may mark, learn, and inwardly digest them," that we may "in such wise hear them," as to experience their influence in our hearts, that "by his Spirit we may have a right judgment in all things," and that he would give us "increase of grace to hear meekly God's word, and to receive it with pure affection, and

[s] *Church Article*, 35.

to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit[t]. Thus our church declares, that, unless the Lord open the understanding, we cannot know the revealed truths; unless he soften our hearts, we cannot obey them: but she likewise declares, that we are to "read, mark, and inwardly digest them," to exercise our powers, and to use all the external helps within our reach.

While the advantage and necessity of reverently perusing the sacred Writings is strenuously maintained, due care must be taken not to press the duty beyond the just limits of obligation. It is obviously, from its very nature, a duty which must be modified by circumstances. Those who are unable to read, are of course exempt from its obligation; and, as every man is to be judged according to what he hath, it can only be required from individuals in proportion to their abilities and education. This furnishes a solution of the scruples and doubts entertained by well-intentioned people, who, while they acknowledge the duty of reading the Scriptures, clearly perceive that it demands for their right interpretation such natural and acquired endowments as comparatively few possess. They are perplexed, therefore, how to reconcile the obligation with the

[t] *Collect* for second Sunday in Advent; for Whitsunday; the *Litany*. Compare the *Order of Confirmation*, and the *Ordination Services*.

difficulty of its performance. But it ought to silence such scruples to reflect that, as God only requires an obedience proportioned to our powers and opportunities, the learned and the unlearned, with regard to the duty of reading the Bible lie under very different obligations. And, in correspondency with this state of things, there is something in the sacred Volume which fits it for all ages, and all conditions of men. "Concerning the hardness of Scripture, (says the *Homily* already quoted,) he that is so weak that he is not able to brook strong meat, yet he may suck the sweet and tender milk, and defer the rest until he wax stronger, and come to more knowledge. For God receiveth the learned and the unlearned, and casteth away none, but is indifferent unto all. And the Scripture is full, as well of low vallies, plain ways, and easy for every man to use and to walk in; as also of high hills and mountains, which few men can climb unto."

Not only Romanists, but some Protestants entertain, what I am persuaded are unfounded, apprehensions as to the consequences of the indiscriminate perusal of the Bible. That it is often perverted to serve worldly purposes; that it is often studied with the sole view to establish preconceived opinions and prejudices; that it is often made the handle of wild and schismatical folly;

and that it is frequently read with little advantage, are truths too evident to be denied; but it would be very rash and precipitate to condemn, on these grounds, the perusal of the sacred Scriptures. This, like every other duty, is liable to abuse, from which it is not fair to draw any other conclusion than the necessity of caution in its performance. The evils alluded to are not so much the consequences of the duty, as the result of some error or mistake in its discharge. If the Bible is read with improper views, and in an improper manner; if the unlearned presumptuously decide on intricate and mysterious matters; and if the requisite means of understanding it are neglected and despised, it cannot be reasonably expected that much, if any, benefit will be reaped from the perusal.

Hence the ministers of Christ, in inculcating the duty of a pious meditation in the Word of God, should at the same time earnestly enforce the necessity of accompanying it with those inward dispositions, and those external helps, which can alone render it successful. Far from slighting the fountain of all divine knowledge, they should carefully point out the way for their flocks to drink the waters, pure and undefiled, of its translucent stream. Though the Bible is often read with little profit, and sometimes with actual

harm, yet the devout perusal of it, while it confirms the principles of faith, gives strength and ardour to every virtue which ought to warm the heart, or adorn the conduct of the Christian. Those who, in any rank of life, will apply to this sacred office, from devout motives, and with suitable dispositions, using such of the helps before described as are within their reach, and praying for the illuminating influence of the Spirit, are not only properly discharging a bounden duty, but will, through the divine blessing, derive from it that spiritual nourishment which is of so much avail to the soul's comfort and edification. They who have leisure ought to devote a considerable portion of time to so useful and edifying a duty, and they whose occupations leave little opportunity for study, may yet dedicate some part of the Lord's day to the perusal of the Scriptures. In any situation a pious zeal will very often snatch a few moments from the world to give them to the inspired Writings; and the busiest, they who are most immersed in secular affairs, may spare some part of that holy season for reading and meditating in the Word of God. By a steady perseverance in this practice, a degree of religious knowledge will, through the divine blessing, be imparted; which, by animating and reviving the impressions of virtue, and enlivening

the hope of immortality, will render the Christian "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works [u]."

Besides the sacred Scriptures there are many other books which may be advantageously read in the retirement of the Sabbath. Works explanatory of the Christian faith, are valuable helps to a correct view of the doctrines of the Gospel, while those of a practical nature supply an useful exposition of the duties and obligations in the various walks of life. From Sermons, Discourses, Elementary Treatises of religion, Sacred Biography, and productions of piety and devotion, much may be reaped that is instructive, much that will prove a powerful incentive to a godly life. Those works which are designed as guides and introductions to the reading of the Scriptures, together with those commentaries and expository works which help to the understanding them, may also be read with much profit. The careful perusal, in short, of books, of whatever kind, which contribute to augment the knowledge, and to stimulate the practice of religion, is an exercise both beneficial, and suited to the great objects of the sacred season. In the number, variety, and excellence of works of this description, our own language is so abundant, that the bare enume-

[u] 2 Tim. iii. 17.

ration of them would form a catalogue of no inconsiderable extent; but believers would do well to be guided in the selection by the judgment of the legally appointed teachers of religion.

Among the most improving of those pious exercises in which it behoves us to be more particularly diligent on the Lord's day, is that internal and silent piety which, without any outward demonstration of its power, occupies and elevates the soul, unobserved by any eye but the eye of Deity. The habit of turning the thoughts inward, with a view to spiritual improvement; of meditating upon the Creator's wisdom, and goodness, and power, displayed in the universe, and in the various dispensations to man; of referring all the blessings we enjoy, and all the events of our lives, to his over-ruling Providence; and of directing a silent prayer or thanksgiving to the Father of mercies, ought to be cultivated with the utmost care. It may be called into operation even amid the daily business and occupation of the world; and, whenever it becomes a rooted and settled habit, it diffuses a sedate, yet cheerful spirit of the happiest influence over the disposition and character. What can be more becoming rational beings than that secret piety, which, at every intermission of employment, at every pause of worldly thought, wings the mind to its Maker and Preserver? In external worship man

may play the hypocrite, and it must ever be more or less accompanied with the distraction of objects of sense; but the worship which is within the bosom can only be prompted by undissembled piety, and forms the most spiritual exercise of man's spiritual nature. It is the holy aspiration of the heart, warm, fervent, and sincere, beyond whatever can be expressed by the utterance of the lips. It is the full devotion of a soul delighted to hold communion with its God. There is something in it so pure, so intellectual, so resembling the service which we may suppose is paid by etherial intelligences, that it must be peculiarly acceptable to the Almighty Being, who requires his creatures to worship him in spirit and in truth. The visible expressions of devotion are necessary while we remain encumbered with mortality, and any attempt to supersede them is the mere dream of mystic fanaticism; but to superadd the habit of constantly reverting to sacred reflections, of lifting up the soul in silence to its Creator, is to give a proper direction to those high moral and intellectual powers with which mankind are endowed.

Though mental devotion is the most refined degree of adoration, and the best evidence of a heart disciplined unto godliness, many impediments lie in the way of its attainment. The natural man is immersed in sense, to which he is

often chained down as well by the innate propensities of the heart, as the attractions which it spreads in alluring abundance. The world displays its fascinations, and, by a thousand various modes, pleasure, business, care, and occupation, steal the affections from the more momentous objects of an invisible eternity. Hence the absolute necessity of a frequent, serious, and candid self-examination. Frequently to inspect our bosoms, to enquire into our sentiments, feelings, and dispositions, and to compare them with the rule of God's commandments, is one of the most effectual means of divesting the heart of its carnality and worldly-mindedness. The repeated exercise of such an impartial scrutiny will, through the divine blessing, gradually withdraw the thoughts from the never-ceasing gaities, and amusements, and cares of life, and attach them to that unseen world to which we are all hastening on the rapid wing of time. Those who are intent upon the cultivation of the holy sentiments and heavenly affections, which should be the aim of every Christian, must withdraw themselves from the distractions of surrounding objects, by retiring into their chambers, and communing with their own hearts. In stillness and retirement let them examine, whether religion has a predominating influence on their conduct; whether it guards them against the pollutions which beset

their earthly pilgrimage; whether it constrains them to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world; and whether it stimulates them to press earnestly forward towards the celestial Zion, by the hope of the glorious reward laid up for the ransomed of the Lord. While engaged in the salutary office of self-investigation, let them fall down on their knees before their Maker, fervently imploring him to pour upon them the influences of his Spirit, to enlighten their understandings, to purify their hearts, and to produce that pervading spirituality required from those who, through the merits of a Saviour, are worthy expectants of a blessed immortality.

Of no less importance is a holy and devout meditation upon the multiplied instances of the divine perfections displayed around us, and upon the hallowed truths revealed in the sacred Scriptures. It is that exercise by which, under divine grace, our faith in the Redeemer is increased, our best affections cherished and enlivened, and by which the whole mind is raised from the low and grovelling thoughts engendered by the world, to a clearer perception of things heavenly and eternal. All religion which is sincere, fervent, and effectual, is, and must be, spiritual. To this every thing else is subservient, and can only be esteemed in proportion as it tends to promote

and maintain spiritual religion in the heart. The external ordinances, as well as the private offices of piety, are calculated to generate and nourish it; but of all those devout exercises which strengthen the influence of religion, there are none better adapted to give it spirituality than silent and retired meditation. The longer any subject is dwelt upon, the deeper is the impression made upon the mind; and, as that of religion surpasses all others in value and importance, the frequent contemplation of it is the likeliest means to fix and rivet its supremacy in the heart. It will produce that seriousness, that earnestness in things pertaining to faith, and that devotedness of the soul to God, which is the unfailing characteristic of genuine Christianity. It provides a mansion, where it ought ever to remain enthroned, in the bosom and in the mind. In many there are strong devotional feelings, but too vehement to be lasting, too much mixed with human passions to be a reasonable service, too much assimilated to natural impulses to be pure, mental religion. They have a relish for the excitements of religion, and a strong devotional fervour, but at the same time unproductive and unprofitable, as being substituted for the calm and benign influence of undefiled religion. The intellectual part of man being but little concerned in such devotion, it wants the purely spiritual character

of true Christianity. It is the effect of passion, of imagination, of constitutional warmth, rather than of the finer affections under the sway and guidance of reason. That spirituality which constitutes the essence of all religion befitting rational beings, can only be acquired, through the divine blessing, by the regular use of the outward means of grace, together with the private exercises of prayer, meditation, and communion with God[x].

Religion, to be available to salvation, must gain full possession of the soul, must be sublimated from all earthly passions, must be as it were incorporated with the mind, till every thought, and every meditation of the heart become holy and spiritualized. To arrive at this happy state should be the constant aim of all our sacred employments; and, valuable as the external expressions of worship must be pronounced, they will be powerless unless we join to them the offices of domestic devotion, devout prayer, the reverent perusal of the Bible, and the inspiring exercises of silent piety. In these offices, then, it behoves us to be assiduous, fervent, devout; daily, if circumstances permit, but especially on the sabbath, which affords a specific opportunity for the spi-

[x] See Dr. Paley, *Discourse on Meditating on Religion*, in his volume of *Sermons*, excelled by none in the enforcement of pure, rational, and spiritual religion.

ritual nurture of the soul. It would betray an unhallowed distrust in the promises of God to suppose that a sincere application to the public and private means of grace will be ineffectual. To those who use them rightly he will bestow the influences of the Spirit commensurate with their exigencies, and efficient to the production of that which is the surest test of all vital religion, a change of heart and life. The things pertaining to the kingdom of God will be often in their thoughts; they "will remember them in their beds, and think upon them when they are waking." Nor will their thoughts on these awful and interesting subjects be, like their former reflections, fleeting and transitory; but they will be steady, serious, enduring, because they find a congenial temper and disposition. The sentiments of the mind will be elevated and refined, the feelings will be purified, the heart will be prepared to receive vivid impressions from the truths of the gospel, and the whole soul will be directed by that principle of faith, which, while it produces all that is amiable in disposition, and all that is lovely or excellent in conduct, forms the support, and consolation, and happiness of the Christian life. Blessed are they in whose hearts religion hath obtained undivided empire. Having their spirits exalted from earth to heaven, from things temporal to things eternal, they alone are

actuated by those motives of faith, and love, and obedience, without which all our sabbatical observances are nothing worth. "Greatly are we deceived, (says Barnabus,) if we imagine that any one can now sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, without being in all things pure in heart[y]."

Yet in taking a moral survey of the times in which we live, without any wish to form a gloomy estimate, we are reluctantly compelled to believe, that the piety of the closet, that best test of sincerity in religion, is not gaining ground. Great is the outward display of religion in the frequency of public worship, in the following of popular preachers, in meetings for disseminating the Scriptures, in societies for promoting missionary labours, in speeches, exertions, and subscriptions for spreading the gospel. An extensive machinery for these purposes is in active operation; and the female sex take a part, and no inconsiderable part, in it, not always with judgment, but with an ardour which they manifest in whatever their affections are centered. On this subject, however, the sentiments of the judicious Hooker may be more authoritative than my own. "What will not poor beguiled souls do, (says he,) through so powerful incitements? It is observable that

[y] Barnabas, *Epist.* §. 15. inter Patres Apostol.

most care is taken to win those whose judgments are commonly weakest, by reason of their sex. We do not consider them as women 'loaden with sins,' but disposed to devotion and holiness; yet it seems unlikely that, if the cause was supported by strong and sound evidence, the greatest industry would prevail in making proselytes among those who have least ability of judgment. The female sex are fitter instruments to further this cause, from their natural eagerness of affection, which makes them, whatever way they pursue, earnest to draw with them husbands, children, and friends; from their disposition to pity, which makes them bountiful in succouring distressed preachers; from the various opportunities they have of procuring encouragement to the brethren; and lastly, from the delight they take in giving large and particular intelligence of the state of all about them[z]."

In that ardour about the externals of religion, which forms the distinguishing feature of the times, there is, it is to be feared, more pretence than reality, more zeal than knowledge. A greater predilection seems to exist for these social and public proceedings, than for the study of the Scriptures, or the offices of secret retirement, meditation, prayer, and self-examination. It is

[z] Hooker, *Eccles. Polity*, Pref. Collinson's Abridgment, p. 18.

to be lamented, as an eminent Prelate observes, "that, in zealous efforts for the improvement of others, too many neglect the improvement of themselves; that the Bible is more praised than read, more circulated than consulted; that, in all ranks of the community, men are to be found, more solicitous to waft the sacred Volume from the Ganges to the Mississippi, than to make it their companion, their guide, and their own familiar friend; and that, in few periods, have declared promoters and advocates of Christianity seemed less inclined to commune with their own hearts, and be still; to enter into their closet, and shut their door, and pray unto their father which seeth in secret, with a calm and peaceful confidence, that their Father which seeth in secret, will reward them openly [a]."

Seriously as these truths are to be deplored, they should excite all in whose hearts the flame of undefiled Christianity burns brightly, to beware of the tendency to external services which characterizes the age. The more the tone and spirit of the times serve to divert the thoughts from inward religion, the more does it become us to bring it home to our business and bosoms. Wherever the hope can be indulged that the Scriptures will be piously and profitably used,

[a] Bishop Jebb, *Sermon* viii, p. 191.

there we are bound to disseminate them; but it is a duty of still superior importance to apply them, through divine assistance, to the regulation of our own hearts. For this purpose they must be studied diligently and reverently, with the assistance of all the human helps obtainable, together with fervent prayer for that illumination from above which can alone enable us to mark, learn, and inwardly digest their sacred lessons. In the zeal which ought to be encouraged towards the public means of grace, we must not forget that the duties of secret piety are equally essential to a life of godliness. With religion is our immediate and personal concern; and we must persevere in holy resolutions, earnest endeavours, and devout prayer, till it becomes a steady, ardent, pervading principle, attuning the soul to that pure and heavenly frame, which, through the meritorious sacrifice of a Redeemer, will fit it for the enjoyment of its God for ever and ever.

Having now discussed the private obligations of the Sabbath, as they respect families *individually*, we must next advert to those which respect families *collectively*.

Among the domestic exercises of the Lord's day, family worship is frequently accounted one of the most important; and, if it be a duty to practise it on every day of the week, it must be of still more pressing obligation on the sacred

season which is set apart for the exclusive service of heaven. But I hope it will not be attributed to any intention of denying or disparaging the efficacy of family worship, if the Author presumes to question the propriety of representing it as an *indispensable* duty. That it is not directly commanded by the Holy Spirit is a truth acknowledged by the most able writers upon the subject; yet, while they allow that it is not *expressly enjoined*, it is considered by many as *plainly implied* in the Word of God: and for proof, appeal is generally made to our Saviour's declaration, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them[b]."

[b] Matt. xviii. 20.

The authors whom I have consulted, and to whom the reader is referred, are Durham, *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, p. 208, et seq.; Willison, *Treatise concerning the Lord's Day*, cap. ii. sect. 2. p. 103, et seq.; Doddridge, *Address to the Master of a Family on the subject of Family-worship*; Job Orton, *Six Discourses on Family Worship;* Jones, *Serious and Friendly Address from a Minister to his Parishioners, on Family Religion, &c.;* Dwight, *Theology*, Sermon 141; Hunter, *Two Sermons on Family Worship*, in the 3rd volume of the Scotch Preacher: Baxter, *Dialogues on Family Religion;* Burkitt, *Help and Guide to Christian Families*, cap. ix.; Belfrage, *Monitor to Families*, Disc. 13; Archibald Hall, *Gospel Worship*, vol. ii. cap. xvii.; Thornton, *Discourse on Prayer*, cap. ii. sect. 2; Cecil, *Remains*, in Works, vol. iii. p. 430; Glen, *Treatise on the Sabbath*, cap. iv. sect. 3: Bickersteth, *Treatise on Prayer*, cap. vii.; Howe, *Obligations to Family Religion and Worship.*

Without entering into an elaborate exposition of the passage, of which this text forms a part, it may be right to state briefly the view which some of the best commentators have taken of it. In the first place, then, our Lord's discourse is addressed to the apostles, and as the promise it contains is clearly not to be limited to the apostolic age, it must be extended to their successors, the ministers and governors of the church, to the end of time. The general sense, therefore, is, that obstinate offenders are to be removed out of the pale of the church; v. 17. that the apostolical ministry are empowered to declare the doctrines, and to enforce the discipline of the Christian church; v. 18. that a small, as well as a large, number of them, "if they agree on earth as touching any thing they shall ask" in regard to doctrine and discipline, shall equally be heard by the Supreme Being: v. 19. "for where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name," and for the purposes before-mentioned, "there will he be in the midst of them" by his especial favour and presence[c]. Hence the passage *prima-*

[c] Series orationis videtur esse hæc; pertinax et obstinatus removeatur e cœtu Christianorum, v. 17; vos estis rectores Ecclesiæ, adeoque penes vos est potestas ejusmodi hominem excludendi, et ubi resipuerit, eum recipiendi, v. 18; nec opus est ut tunc magnus sit cœtus, ut vos etiam omnes præsentes sitis, nam si vel duo vestrum de aliqua re convenerunt, quæ ad

rily relates to the government of the church of God by the duly authorized ministry, whom our Lord hath invested with the requisite power and authority.

But some are of opinion that it has an *indirect* reference to the expression of worship which is required from believers, and consequently affords, by the gracious promise it conveys, an encouragement both to public and domestic prayer. Of this number is Bishop Blomfield, who says, "It is then in the solemn assembly, in the courts of the Lord's house, where God is worshipped in the beauty, as well as in the spirit, of holiness, that we are naturally inclined to look for the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise; *there am I in the midst of them.* Yet that promise is certainly not so limited; but is as general, as it is gracious and encouraging; *where two or three are gathered together in my name.* It appears, then, that his presence may be looked for in the smallest, as well as in the most numerous assembly of his disciples, provided that they are moved by one common faith, inspired with a common devotion,

religionem, ad societatem Christianorum pertinet, ratum erit apud Deum, et preces vestræ exaudientur, v. 19; nam etiam duobus vel tribus, admodum paucis doctoribus religionis meæ meisque legatis, auxilio meo adero, v. 20." Kuinoël, *Comment* in Matt. xviii. 20. See Archbishop Potter, *Discourse on Church Government*, p. 306—319.

and are agreed as to the objects of their assembling. I do not perceive what interpretation can be put upon our Saviour's words, by which they can be made to imply less than this—an assurance of his especial regard and blessing upon every religious assembly of his true and obedient disciples, met together as he has directed. And if so, consider what an encouragement they afford, and consequently what an obligation they create, to the assembling of ourselves together, not only at the stated and solemn returns of public worship, in our character of members of the visible church of Christ; but on all those occasions of common devotion which are presented to us by the relations of domestic life [d]."

There are others, however, who, believing that the passage in question has no reference to the practice of domestic worship, rest its obligation not so much upon any precept or authority of Scripture, as upon considerations of utility. These are, its beneficial influence on servants and the young members of a family; its recommendation of piety by the example of a father or master; its adaptation to domestic wants and situations; and its efficacy in keeping alive the feelings of devotion, which are apt to grow languid, unless daily renewed.

[d] Bishop Blomfield, *Sermon on the duty of Family Prayer.*

The strongest objection against family worship is, the danger lest, by becoming a mere habit and routine, it should cause religion to degenerate into languor and indifference. But this does not so much apply against the office itself, as the manner in which it is too frequently performed. Without the utmost care and circumspection it will be apt to turn religion into a mere matter of daily custom and ordinary business. The frequency of its repetition has, without due caution, a tendency to damp the fervency of devotion, and to beget that indifference, which of all obstacles to vital Christianity, is the most to be dreaded. Assembling not always with a suitable temper of soul, sometimes with distracted thoughts, with bosoms oppressed with care, with wandering imaginations, the mind and the affections are not in tune with the sacredness of an office, liable, for that reason to become a cold inanimate service. In the inevitable hurry and distraction of the six working days, it is apt to degenerate into mere custom and formality, into a lifeless ceremony, which is any thing rather than the religion of the heart. Family worship, it is to be feared, is often performed in such a way as to leave an impression of its being only a matter of course, and it can be nothing wonderful if, instead of strengthening the religious principle, it should, in such cases, fail of leaving that calm and de-

vout spirit in the inward man, which results from the devout discharge of religious duties.

As much of its usefulness depends upon the mode in which it is conducted, those who adopt the practice of it should guard with all care against the abuse to which, without constant vigilance, it is exposed. But when it is performed in such a manner, and under such circumstances as to ensure the benefit which it is capable of affording, it is a practice to be earnestly recommended. At the same time it is not absolutely commanded in the sacred Scriptures; and there is a wide difference between duties expressly enjoined, and the practices which we deem in a religious point of view expedient: they rest upon different grounds; the one are perpetually binding and indispensable, the other are in some degree subjected to human choice and determination.

As family worship is not a prescribed duty of religion, some difference of opinion as to its obligation and expediency, is inevitable; but every man should adopt in his own case that course which, after deliberate inquiry, he is persuaded will most contribute to the honour of God, and the religious benefit of himself and his own household. Let all, however, be careful to guard against the exercise of a rash and uncharitable judgment upon the conduct of others, where we

are supplied with no express scriptural direction. There is, it is to be feared, a disposition to make family prayer a test of piety, and to condemn all as worldly and profane in whose domestic circle it is not practised. Presumptuous judgment this, and opposed, if any thing can be, to the genius of Christianity. Many of those who do not practise it are, as far as human eye can discern, actuated by a vital principle of faith, and are sincerely desirous to fulfil their religious obligations. We ought not to judge them, but to leave them to the approval or condemnation of Him, to whose tribunal alone they are amenable.

Culpable, likewise, is that spiritual pride which attaches such a merit and value to family worship, as if it were the criterion whereby the true believers are distinguished. It is not religion, but merely instrumental to religion; and it should not rank higher in our estimation than any other of those means which are only to be prized in proportion to their usefulness in cultivating a sincere devotion. It is bigotry to esteem the means equally with the end. If the motive justified the deed, it would go far in extenuating the examples of superstition and enthusiasm which history blushes to record. There is a Pharisaism still existing, which connects a peculiar degree of holiness with certain rites, and modes, and observances, the authority of which is not

derived from the infallible standard of sacred truth. Judging from some modern publications one might suppose that Christianity consisted in abstaining wholly from the common amusements of the world, in the use of certain cant phrases and expressions, in frequent attendance in religious societies, in carrying an outward seriousness of deportment, in having religion ever upon the tongue, and in complying with certain usages which are deemed characteristic of true faith, though not proved by warranty of Sacred Writ. If, however, it be piety to observe the inventions of men, it will stamp with the sacredness of religion the most absurd devices which have ever been formed by the fanatic imagination of man. To regard aught as *essential* in religion besides the prescriptions of the Book of Life, is just the same spirit of bigotry which actuates the ascetic in his fasts, the monk in his seclusion, and the Bramin in his macerations.

It may be observed in the last place, that in all family religion the master ought to consider himself as the head, or in a lower sense, the priest and minister of his household. No other should conduct the worship which is there offered, not even those who are invested with the clerical character. It is an encroachment upon the prerogative of the master, who is constituted both by nature and religion, guide of the church in

his own house; and in clergymen of the church of England it is a violation of that ecclesiastical discipline which he is bound to preserve and support. The duty of common prayer, says Bishop Blomfield, "may either be performed with a degree of public solemnity, under the guidance of a minister duly appointed for that purpose; or in the more limited, but distinct and well-defined circle of family and household, under the superintendance and direction of its head. Every man ought to consider himself as a member of that church in whose bosom he has been brought up; and also as the minister and steward of the church in his own house." And again: "Every Christian ought to be the head and guide of the church in his own house; to instruct, admonish, and encourage all its inmates, to the zealous performance of the common work which they have to do for Him, who is the Lord and Master of them all[e]."

Such is the judgment of my learned Diocesan; and it is accordant with the dictates of natural and revealed religion, that family worship should be conducted by its head and guardian, a privilege with which no other person should interfere. Let our attention be now directed to another domestic duty, of the very first importance, the religious education of families.

[e] *Sermon on Family Worship*, p. 12, 15.

The sabbath having been appointed for the benefit of man, it is incumbent upon all to use the means, both public and private, of spiritual edification. The great body of the people have few opportunities besides of religious instruction. Those of the Lord's day, should, therefore, be turned by them to a proper account. Every individual should strive to improve his experimental knowledge in regard to things eternal. Those who neglect it wilfully, shut their eyes against those celestial beams which have been shed from heaven to enlighten the world. It behoves us, then, to endeavour to implant and cherish in others that which is so important to all; and hence supreme governors are bound to provide for the public instruction of the people, and masters of families are to be anxious to extend the blessings of religious edification to their children and dependants. Of the former there is *now* in this kingdom but little reason to complain, the churches being open to all, where the pure doctrines of the gospel are regularly taught, and strenuous efforts being made, by the erection of new ones, to meet the daily increasing demand for accommodation. As the head of a household, a man fulfils his duty by taking his family to the public ministrations of religion, by catechizing his children, by private instruction, by pious admonition, by reading useful publications, by furnishing them with instructive books, by accustoming them

to habits of order and regularity, and perhaps not least effectually by setting an example of seriousness and devotion in his own person.

Momentous are the duties which a master is bound to discharge towards the domestic community, of which he is the guardian and guide. On week-days we are to labour in such things as contribute to the wants of the body; on sunday we must administer to the wants of the soul; and this is of infinitely higher moment, since it involves the interests of the immortal spirit, while the former relates to a world which passeth away as a shadow. He who is desirous of exemplifying his faith by his practice, will attend with diligence on this day to the religious instruction of his children, servants, and dependants. To describe the precise mode in which this is to be effected is impossible, as it must vary according to family circumstances and situation. But he is under the most sacred obligations to employ, together with meek supplication for the divine blessing upon his efforts, all those means which he may deem most effectual, in his own domestic circle, for training them "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Man does not exist for himself alone. It was not the design of Providence, in forming the social compact, that he should be a selfish being, wrapt in solitary enjoyment, to be ministered to by children and menials, and, without

making any return, to dream away his time in passive ease, and indolent security. The obligations are reciprocal, and, while they are to respect him as the head, he is not only to supply their temporal necessities, but also to be zealous and active in administering to their spiritual wants. If he omits this, however he may otherwise provide for them, he is guilty of a criminal negligence towards those, whose principles he ought to guard and defend, as being partakers with him of the same spiritual privileges, and of the same hopes of heaven and immortality.

The sabbatical instruction and catechising of the young members of Christ's fold, is usually represented as a very responsible branch of the clerical office. It is earnestly and repeatedly urged in Episcopal Charges; it is commended and enforced by most of those who have treated of the pastoral duties[f]; and, what is of still higher consideration, it is prescribed by the Anglican church[g]. He who considers the practice and example of Christian antiquity, the suscep-

[f] It will be sufficient to refer to the Tracts in *The Clergyman's Instructor*, ed. 2. Oxon. 1813; by Herbert, p. 64; by Bishop Taylor, p. 108; by Bishop Burnet, p. 199; by Bishop Sprat, p. 255; by Bishop Bull, p. 298; by Bishop Gibson, p. 320; by Archbishop Hort, p. 361.

[g] See the *Rubric* at the end of the Catechism; the *Ordering of Deacons;* and *Canon* 59.

tibility in youth of impressions, whether good or bad, the advantage of being taught in infancy the way men should go, and that, unless the good seed be early sown, and maturely cultured, the enemy will sow tares in the heart, must regard the catechetical institution of the young as the best preservative of sound and orthodox principles. But, however much it may be regretted, the custom of ministerial catechising has fallen into very general neglect. Such indeed is the fact; and, as far as my own observation has extended, wherever it has been attempted to be revived, it has not been followed with merited success. Considering the high character and zeal of the Established Clergy, its failure, as it cannot be attributed to any remissness on their part, ought rather to be ascribed to a change in the opinions, manners, and circumstances of the age. The supineness of the clergy, long the subject of virulent invective with infidels and scorners, is now too unfounded, too stale and vulgar to be the topic of abuse.

Some other reason, then, must be assigned for the disuse of public catechetical instruction; and from an impartial investigation it will appear to have partly arisen from the diminution of the power and influence of the clerical order at the æra of the Reformation. By her claim of infallibility the church of Rome exacts a reverential obe-

dience; and by means of indulgences, penance, and auricular confession, the priesthood acquire an almost unlimited ascendancy over the minds of the people. To the catholic clergy her children are instructed to pay implicit deference; to them they are taught to look, not only for spiritual guidance, but also for sealing the pardon of their offences, and, to a certain extent, for the remission of the future punishment of sin. The peculiar doctrines, upon which this predominating influence rested, were rejected by the Reformers; and the Protestant ministry, in ceasing to hold the same power over the consciences of the people, have ceased to command the same regard and obedience. God forbid that the spiritual domination of an ambitious Hierarchy should ever again lord it over a Protestant land; but whether, in opposing papal infallibility, Protestants may not sometimes have trenched upon the lawful authority of the church; whether, in casting off the shackles of ecclesiastical tyranny, they may not have fallen into laxity of discipline; and whether, in subverting the influence of an aspiring priesthood, they may not have lessened the respect which is due to the ministers of God's word, are questions which it is not for the Author of these remarks to determine. The Church of England clergy, however, no longer standing in the same situation between the soul and its Ma-

ker as the Roman Catholic clergy, have no longer the same importance in the eyes of the laity. The spiritual connexion between them and their flocks has been altered; the consequence of which is, that the former cannot *now* command obedience, and the latter will not seek that ministerial instruction of the young which the great body of them have ceased to regard as indispensably necessary.

Another cause of the disuse complained of is the increased refinement, or perhaps, more properly speaking, the prevailing pride of the age, which disdains the intermixture of different ranks in the business of education. It would be deemed an indignity for the children of the gentry to mingle with those of the tradesman, the peasant, or the artificer; the former are, therefore, withheld from becoming parochial catechumens, and the latter soon learn to despise what their superiors neglect. The same effect has likewise followed from the almost universal diffusion of education. When a great part of the population were unable to read, catechising formed the principal means of instilling the truths of religion into the minds of the young; but now, when education is so widely extended, and books are found in every dwelling, other sources of information are open to all classes. Religious instruction is so facilitated by tracts and elementary

treatises, that the poorest can obtain it; for which reason it is little to be wondered that the people cease to have recourse to a method of imparting it, which they imagine is no longer recommended by necessity.

To these causes, if I am not mistaken, is to be attributed the growing disuse of public catechising; yet let it not thence be inferred that its utility has vanished, or that it is not advisable to adopt it wherever it can be used with success. So efficacious a means of instruction should never be omitted where circumstances admit its employment; at the same time, though its revival would be hailed with sincere gratification by every sound churchman, it appears unfortunately too true, that, in consequence of a change in the national character and habits, the duty, generally speaking, has devolved upon other hands; what was formerly an important branch of the ministerial labour, now principally belongs to the parental office. However disadvantageous the change may be, and how much soever to be regretted, it is one for which it will be difficult to find a remedy. There is no lack of zeal, no want of exertion in the clergy to renew the practice; but without some great and unexpected change in public opinion, it is very questionable whether it can ever again become general. Wherever the office of ministerial catechising can be practised,

let it not be neglected; but if catechising, to be generally performed, must be performed by those who are intrusted with the education of youth, let the ministers of Christ inculcate upon parents and guardians the necessity of a practice no less pleasing than useful, and afford such advice and directions as may assist them in executing it with assiduity and advantage.

A distinguished Prelate, speaking of this subject, remarks, that, "it is observable, that, in exact proportion as catechising has been practised or neglected, in the same proportion have the public faith and morals been seen to flourish or decline[h]." If this representation were correct, religion, in these realms, where the usage, as he himself owns, is fallen into nearly total neglect, would be in a deplorable state of decay; but, admitting the existence of a widely-spread distempered feeling on religious subjects, it is fairly questionable whether, upon the whole, public faith and morals are on the decline. By the merciful ordination of Providence all evil is met by some counteracting good; and the disuse of Ministerial catechising has been in some degree balanced by other modes of training up the young members of the Christian community. Among the better informed orders of society

[h] Bishop Jebb, *Charge in* 1823, p. 21.

it has been in part compensated by the greater diligence which parents and teachers, in consequence of this disuse, have found necessary to employ in inculcating the first principles of faith; and among the humbler, by the enlarged and still rapidly increasing means of education.

The instruction of the children of the poor, and of the labouring classes, has been of late years greatly facilitated and extended by the establishment of sunday schools. If conducted upon right principles, they will, under the divine blessing, be one of the most efficacious means of training the rising generation to moral and religious habits. The regular attendance at school and church, is of itself favourable to virtue, while, under the superintendance of the clergy, sound principles may be instilled, and the most useful lessons inculcated upon the infant mind, the advantage of which will be experienced in after life. The carelessness, the indifference, and the vice which unhappily prevail among the humbler ranks, throw formidable impediments in the way, of which those alone can be justly sensible who have been concerned in the management of such schools: but however we may regret the want of success which sometimes attends the most zealous efforts, our exertions should not be relaxed. Much may be accomplished by perseverance; and experience of the benefits, it may

be hoped, will in time cause a general eagerness among the poor to extend them to their children. So little open to objection are these institutions, and so fraught with the most beneficial effects, that it ought to be the wish of every servant of Christ, of every friend to humanity, to render their operation universal. These, together with the exertions of the National School Society; a Society deserving the warmest support of every member of our Apostolical church, afford an encouraging prospect for the future; and from their united efforts it is reasonable to expect an increase of attachment to our venerable establishments, civil and ecclesiastical, a gradual extension of religious feeling, and a consequent improvement in the national character[1].

Such are the private and domestic duties required of those who would devote the sabbath to the consecrated objects of its institution. It is not meant that ALL these duties are to be performed *every sabbath,* or that they are ALL incumbent upon *every individual:* but they are to be practised, either all or in part, either on

[1] It has been made a question, whether the teaching of writing in Sunday-Schools be not a breach of the sabbatical law. To prohibit it, however, appears to be too strict a construction of the statute, as it may well be considered a work of charity. Nevertheless, the time may, probably, be employed other ways to much better purpose.

every sabbath, or successively, as may appear most expedient to every person's own judgment and discretion. Private prayer, meditation, self-examination, studying the Bible, reading books of piety and devotion, family worship, catechetical instruction of the young and uninformed, are confessedly religious exercises proper for the Lord's day. Varied, however, they must be, according to the different relations sustained in society, and as they may be best adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which those who use them are placed; but to direct beforehand the exact proportion and the particular application of them, is to assume a power over others inconsistent with Christian liberty. Every individual should exercise himself herein in the way which he deems most likely to meet the exigencies of his own case, and of those with whom he may be united by any of the ties which bind society together; but the time and manner, the degree and nature of these exercises must be left to his own determination, which will commonly be right if he humbly and sincerely follows his best judgment, meekly praying for the light and guidance of God's Spirit. The great object of the institution is to be kept constantly in view, which is the commemoration of the divine goodness in creation and redemption, and the improvement of the heart in godliness. He who adopts

such exercises of privacy and devotion, as he conscientiously esteems most conducive to that end, truly fulfils the domestic duties of the sacred season.

The several obligations imposed by the sabbath, in its twofold character of a day of rest and a day of holiness, have now been investigated. I cannot, however, conclude this part of the enquiry without feeling some anxiety, considering how easily error may arise from too much laxity on the one hand, and over-strained rigour on the other, from an incautious application of Scripture precepts, and from hasty decisions respecting matters which the sacred writers have determined. Under such circumstances, to expect an exemption from all mistake, or to satisfy every reader, were a delusive hope: some points also are of such a nature as to admit a difference of opinion: yet I flatter myself (so strong is my own conviction,) that the conclusions attempted to be established in this chapter will be found substantially accordant with the word of God, and its best interpreter, the Anglican Church.

CONCLUSION.

A FORMAL recapitulation of the arguments advanced in the preceding chapters, would swell this work beyond its just limits; it may, nevertheless, be proper to state briefly the conclusions to which they have led. It has been proved that the sabbatical institution is fraught with moral and political benefits sufficient, if it were only of human appointment, to recommend its adoption to the philanthropist; (chap. i.) that it was first instituted at the creation, by a divine command, addressed to the whole human race, and consequently binding upon all mankind, if not subsequently repealed (chap. ii.); that it was adopted into the Mosaic dispensation, but under circumstances which shewed that it was to survive the extinction of the peculiar polity of the Hebrews, (chap. iii.); that, so far from being abrogated under the Christian dispensation, it is clearly enjoined in the New Testament, (chap. iv.); that, although it is not unalterably fixed to any particular day of the septenary cycle, there is a pecu-

liar propriety in keeping the first day of the week, (chap. iv. sect. 2.); and that the observance of the institution, and on the first day of the week, is sanctioned by the authority and practice of the ancient Christian church, (chap. v.) To these conclusions, established upon grounds which, it is believed, cannot easily be shaken, it has been attempted to add a deduction of those principles by which ecclesiastical governors, and private individuals, ought to be guided in the consecration of the seventh day.

Such is the result of the inquiry, and if it rest, as it assuredly does, upon incontrovertible evidence, let it be duly considered what an obligation it creates to maintain inviolate the sanctity of the sabbath day. Of no light importance can that institution be which is coeval with the world, and which has formed a part of every successive dispensation of religion. The Patriarch, the Jew, the Christian, though with some variety, and some observances peculiar to each, have been commanded to keep A SABBATH; and it cannot be a venal offence to neglect or profane what the Deity has thought fit to enjoin in *every* revelation of his will. Upon Christian believers it imposes the most solemn and awful obligations; being ratified by our Saviour, inculcated by express declarations, and sanctioned by the conduct of the Apostles, as well as by the practice of the

pure primitive church of Christ, whose authority, though not infallible, must ever demand our reverence and respect. The multiplied advantages, civil and religious, of the weekly festival, must secure to it the favour of every moral, every humane man; while those who open their eyes to the light of celestial truth, must regard its devout observance as the mandate of heaven. Its holy solemnization has accordingly been observed from the apostolic age, wherever genuine faith has been found to flourish, by the saints of ancient days, by the glorious army of martyrs, by all, in short, who, in any period of the church, have been distinguished by the fervour of their piety and virtue.

Surrounded with such a cloud of witnesses to the truth, it would ill become us to infringe the rest and sanctity of this holy day by continuing our ordinary occupations, by secular pursuits, by unnecessary travelling, by splendid entertainments, by the employment of servants or cattle in needless labour, or by any other engagement incompatible with the sacred purposes of the institution. Works of necessity and charity are never inopportune; such recreations as are required for the refreshment of the spirits, and the renovation of the body, may be innocently enjoyed; in other respects it should be kept "a holy rest unto the Lord." Who but must wish the

universal observance of an ordinance which brings to the industrious and labouring classes a temporary relief from incessant toil? But for this festival, such of our brethren as earn their daily food by the sweat of their brows, would waste away in cheerless, unmitigated misery. Doomed to perpetual labour, broken in spirit, impaired in bodily vigour, they would wear out the residue of their days in hopeless despondency. The sabbath allows a periodical suspension of labour most refreshing and salutary, a sweet consolation of an existence, which, without the regular recurrence of ease and recreation, would be an existence of wretchedness. Who that has a spark of humanity in his bosom, would wrest from them this small drop of comfort, which a gracious Providence has thrown into their cup of sorrow?

Of still higher moment is the opportunity thus granted for that holy preparation, which can alone, through the merits of a Redeemer, fit the soul for an inheritance in the regions of light. Those who are engaged in the busy scenes of life have at least one day in the week for attending to the concerns of their immortal spirits. Rob them not of this boon of indulgent heaven, nor lead them, by any unnecessary employment, to disregard, or misuse so valuable, so sacred a privilege. Much will those have to answer for who, for the sake of some trifling gain, some idle

pleasure, some transitory self-indulgence, cause others to neglect the proper business of this holy season: much also will those have to answer for who are guilty of voluntarily disparaging so great a blessing. If subjected by their destiny to the labour of six days, the seventh should be sincerely and assiduously devoted to the care of their souls; the less leisure they enjoy, the more earnestly should they convert the little that may be afforded them to the business of their heavenly vocation. Having their peculiar obstacles to surmount, they should give the greater heed to the sacred services of the day to keep alive the thoughts of eternity, which would otherwise be banished by the business and occupations of life. Let them especially beware, lest, through eagerness for recreation and enjoyment, that which should be a sanctified rest become to them an occasion of licentiousness, or of forgetfulness of God. Many a soul has been lost through supineness and neglect; and if they have any reverence for their Lord and Master, any attachment to his laws, any regard for their own future happiness, let them employ the rest of that day which is sacred to him, in those acts of public and private religion, without which it cannot be acceptable in his sight.

Nor can those who are blessed with more ample leisure plead any exemption from the duties

of the Lord's day. If the talents with which they are intrusted are not duly improved, they will not be able to bear that strict account which will one day be demanded of them. Many are the temptations with which they have to contend, temptations too often successful in winning upon their affections. Wealth presents before their eyes its dazzling splendours; ambition pictures all its glories to their imagination; and pleasure dances before their eyes in all the gaiety of its delusive charms. Thus buoyed up by delusive expectations, thus allured by fond hopes, how often do they neglect the things eternal, in the wild career of worldly pursuits and enjoyments? To them this holy festival, by its regular return, supplies an useful and solemn admonition. It withdraws the attention from things vain and perishable; it gives them a little pause from the follies and vanities of the world, a little respite from the unceasing importunities of business or of pleasure. Let them hail its return with sober joy; let them not slight its admonitory call; but, remembering that it is a day which God claims as his own, let them seek his favour by disengaging themselves, for a time, from the scenes of life, by attending on public worship, by diligence in the duties of retirement, of secret prayer, and devout meditation.

A festival not more salutary to the rich than

the poor, to the fortunate than the unfortunate, to the happy than the wretched, should be kept sacred to its destination by all ranks and conditions of men. The devout observance of it is instrumental, I had almost said absolutely necessary, to the growth and cultivation of those holy sentiments and affections which should inhabit the bosom of the Christian. There is a lurking attachment in the heart to objects of sense; the world is ever displaying its fascinations to the view; the arch-enemy of man is continually spreading his delusions before our path; and, if we wish to resist the influence of these seductions, the mind must be fortified by the offices of religion. If the sabbatical duties of piety be neglected, the principles of faith will languish, and the impressions of virtue, which have been imprinted in youth, will gradually wear away. By setting the affections on the things of this lower sphere, by dissolving in ease and pleasure, by too eagerly pursuing the honours and emoluments of the present life, the pure flame of religion will be extinguished. It can only be kept alive in the heart by withdrawing the thoughts at stated seasons from temporal things, by deep contrition for our past offences, by earnest supplication for pardon and acceptance through the merits of Christ, by a humble prostration of ourselves before the throne of grace, in fervent prayer for the sanc-

tification of the Spirit. Withdrawing on every Lord's day from the tumultuous scenes of life, we must attend to the things which belong to our eternal peace; we must retire into our chambers to commune with our own hearts, to hold converse with our Maker, and to implore our heavenly Father to deliver us in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Thus alone can the principle of faith be preserved pure and unsullied in the breast; thus alone can we become worthy of that divine grace, without which our souls cannot be purified and harmonized for celestial blessedness.

According to the manner in which the sabbath has been kept in all ages, religion has been found to flourish or decay. Wherever the desecration of it has prevailed, it has been attended by a corresponding decay of vital Christianity. Look at the spiritual condition of several continental kingdoms; look at the Roman Catholic countries; look at the state of France, whose rebel sons, in the phrenzy of revolutionary madness, endeavoured to banish the very remembrance of every thing sacred, while with sacrilegious hands they tore down the altars of their God. In these fair portions of the earth, where the Lord's day is systematically disregarded and profaned, fair religion veils her face, and the tone of public morals

is proportionably low. Impiety, and the desecration of this festival, must, in the nature of things, have a mutual relationship. Do you see a family blind to the truths of Revelation, averse to practical godliness, and regardless of their eternal interests? There the fear and the worship of God are habitually neglected. Where are the individuals addicted to open profligacy, or secret sensuality? They are to be found among those who contemn this holy ordinance. Is there a remorseless villain, a cool deceiver, an abandoned violator of the laws of earth and heaven? They are, every one, profaners of the Lord's day. It may be laid down as a maxim, indisputably true of nations, of families, and of individuals, that their piety and virtue are in exact proportion to their observance of the sabbatical institution.

The sanctification of the sabbath is not only the best preservative of the religious principle, but is likewise attended with the approbation of God. He blessed the seventh day, pronounced it the time for conferring his choicest blessings, and for being propitious to those who strive to keep it holy in the true spirit of faith and piety. It would betray an unholy scepticism to doubt the fulfilment of this promise. That the devotional services of the sabbath are accompanied with the especial favour of the Deity is a truth, to which every humble Christian can bear ample

testimony. Many a rebellious disposition has been subdued on that day, many a slumbering soul awakened, many a proud heart humbled. Multitudes of those who have wandered into the bye-paths of sin, have been recalled by the public ministrations of the Lord's day; and innumerable are those who have been strengthened with pious confidence to go on their way rejoicing. The gracious promises of the Gospel, the sacramental seals to these promises, the more immediate manifestations of divine love, are the gifts of this consecrated day. Where two or three are assembled together for public worship, there is Christ in the midst of them, confirming their hopes, administering to their wants, regarding with a favouring eye their imperfect services, and supplying that spiritual help, without which all our labours are ineffectual to salvation. Sincere believers, who are earnestly contending for the prize of their high calling, are thus prepared, by their devout observation of this holy day, to receive more grace, and more abundant blessing; and the whole host of ransomed spirits will have cause to magnify the mercies of their Redeemer's festival.

Being, therefore, the day which the Lord hath made, a day upon which he hath stampt the character of sacredness, and to the religious observance of which he hath annexed a special blessing,

to divert it from the holy purposes of its appointment, is a profanation, of which, as Christians, we should tremble to be guilty. We should guard against the fatal delusion of supposing that we can violate the commands of God with impunity, or obtain salvation by any other mode than that which he hath prescribed in the Book of Life. He has commanded every seventh day to be kept holy: let us not, then, by the desecration of it, subject ourselves to the severity of his vengeance. Oh! let us from this moment resolve to make the Christian sabbath a day of heavenly rest and refreshment, a day of exalted piety, a day of holy preparation for the dread tribunal, before which we must all stand. It is no harsh prescription which requires the dedication of one day in the week to him in whom we live and move, and from whom we have our being. If we cannot spare this portion of time for religion, if we feel it too great a sacrifice even to the mandate of Omnipotence, it is highly requisite instantly to examine our own hearts by the standard of God's Word. Some root of bitterness must be there, some leaven of iniquity, which can thus render cheerless and distasteful that which should be a day of sacred joy and consolation. The very disinclination to devout exercises is the strongest reason for arousing from this careless slumber of the soul, for rising from this spiritual

death, that Christ, through redeeming love, may bring us by penitence and faith to life and immortality.

Let no chilling indifference, therefore, no specious sophistry, no example, however prevalent induce us to profane, or disregard the Christian sabbath. It is a day by divine consecration holy unto the Lord; but it must ever be borne in mind, that it is a diligent performance of its various obligations which can alone make it to us a day of holiness. We may turn it into a day of vanity, a day of indolence, a day of unprofitable amusement, a day of vicious indulgence. The misemployment of it is a wilful and wicked rejection of a boon which heaven has in mercy granted for the furtherance of our eternal interests. It therefore depends upon ourselves, whether it will only be instrumental in increasing our condemnation, or be the means of advancing our proficiency in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Of such importance it is to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; for the only way in which it can be promotive of the soul's advantage is, by discharging the duties belonging to its sanctification.

The fulfilment of these obligations in a world abounding with temptations to sin, demands much steady resolution, much patient perseverance; but it is encouraging to be assured that victory

will be crowned with an abundant recompence. In the Christian life difficulties must be encountered; but he who, undaunted by a few failures, stedfastly aims at the prize of his high calling in Christ, will ultimately triumph; he will go on from step to step, from gradation to gradation, till he will find in spiritual things an overflowing fountain of enjoyment. The duties of the Lord's day, at first attended with distaste, perhaps with pain, will in process of time become easy, will at length be performed with complacency, and at last be regarded as the source of the most pure and exalted delights. Much will be effected by the power of habit, and still more by the special blessing of God, which is ever present to those who conscientiously endeavour to walk in the fear of the Lord blameless. The influence of the Holy Spirit will be shed abroad in the hearts of such as strive, with sincere and faithful efforts, to hallow the sabbath day. The Almighty giveth the Holy Ghost to them that obey him[k], and, as the Spirit helpeth our infirmities[l], it bringeth forth the fruits of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance[m]. Assisted by the power from on high, believers are girded with strength to press forward in the paths of righteousness, which, by the

[k] Acts v. 32. [l] Rom. viii. 26. [m] Gal. v. 22.

transfusion of a purer spirit, become the paths of happiness, so that they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory [n].

Here, then, is a test by which we may ascertain our progress in a religious life. The sanctification of the sabbath is indispensable to them who shall be meet for the holiness of heaven. But the performance of the duties proper for that purpose will be vain, if it springs from a listless, tired, and reluctant mind. The obedience which the Deity requires is the obedience of a cheerful and willing heart. We must "call the sabbath a delight;" we must love it, and all its holy occupations; we must hail with inward joy its return as the renewal of those devout feelings and sacred employments, which, while they inspire the holiest raptures, lift the soul by divine assistance above earthly pollutions, and bring it nearer to its God. By this spiritual consecration alone of our hearts and minds can we be fitted, through the merits of a Saviour, for an everlasting sabbath in the society of glorified spirits, who, with the pure transports of unutterable joy, shall hymn the Triune God for ever and ever!

[n] 1 Pet. i. 8.

THE END.

Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's Square, London.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

I.

The SCRIPTURE TESTIMONIES to the DIVINITY of our LORD JESUS, Collected and Illustrated; to which are added, a List of Authors Consulted, and an Index of Texts. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

II.

An ATTEMPT to ILLUSTRATE the BOOK of ECCLESIASTES. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

III.

An ATTEMPT towards an IMPROVED VERSION of the PROVERBS of SOLOMON, with Notes, Critical and Explanatory, and a Preliminary Dissertation. 8vo. 15s.

IV.

A DISSERTATION on THE FALL OF MAN; in which the Literal Sense of the Mosaic Account of that event is asserted and vindicated. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01003 2532